Swami Ramtirth's Conversations with Muslim Representatives

Islam and Vedant



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SWAMI RAMTIRTHA

A Concised Life-Sketch

Birth	:	Oct. 22, 1873 at Murariwala, District Gujaranwala, Punjab (India) now in Pakistan.
Education	:	M.A. (Maths) 1895 (In B.A. topped Punjab University).
Languages	:	English, Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, German & Poet of English, Urdu, Punjabi nd Persian.
Marriage	:	1883 (Smt. Shiv Dei—wife) (Two Sons).
Profession (Teaching)	:	**Second Master** - Scotch Mission High School, Sialkot.
		Prof. (Mathematics) - Mission College, Lahore.
		Reader (Mathematics) - Oriental College, Lahore.
Self-Realisation	:	August, 1898-Brahmpuri (Uttrakhanda), Himalayas.
Wordly-Detachment	:	July, 1900 (gave up all secular posts and left home for ever and went into the woods of Himalayas.
Renunciation	:	January, 1901-Tehri (Turned a monk).
World Tour	:	August, 1902 - Dec., 1904.
Demise (Nirwan)	:	October 17, 1906 at Simlasu (a royal resort of Tehri Garhwal), now merged (2002) into Ramtirtha Sagar.

Swami Ramtirtha, popularly known as ***Ram Badshah*** or the King Ram, not only widely travelled at home but carrying his message of universal love went abroad also. He, as a spiritual ambassador of India to the whole world, visited Japan, America, Egypt and other countries. Throughout his journey he was loved by all, irrespective of caste, creed or nationality. It is remarkable that Swami Ramtirtha, being a Sanyasi or Hindu monk, during his voyage touched no money and kept no baggage.

During the global excursion he reached Japan by ship, in the beginning of Oct. 1902. For, the Buddhists of Japan, he appeared like a living Buddha, who once more showed his lusture like a shooting star. He delivered a great lecture in the High College of Commerce at Tokyo, in which he proved that the ancestors of the Indians and the Japanese were the same. He also addressed to a large audience in an International Buddhist Conference held in Japan. He also laid the foundation of Indo-Japanese Society, which is a landmark in the cultural history of Japan.

Swami Ramtirtha, after leaving Japan reached America, and there most probably before mid of Nov. 1902 and there he stayed for about two years. He projected a glowing image of profound Indian culture and philosophy which enhanced the prestige of his country and people. It is on record that while in America, Swami Ramatirtha made a fervent appeal to the Americans for the freedom of India, on behalf of his countrymen at primus.

In America his lectures were so inspiring and uplifting that a society-***Rama's Society*** was formed at Portland (Oregon) by his American admirers. He also presided over the meeting of the World Unity League held at Geneva. The Christians in America adored him as a living Christ.

On his way back to India Swami Ramtirtha stepped on Egypt in Nov., 1904. Here he, as a Hindi Philosopher, discoursed in a grand mosque at Ciaro in Persian, throwing the listeners into divine ecstasy. The Muslims in Egypt honoured Swami Ramtirtha as a God-intoxicated soul.

After returning to India, at Mathura he was asked by some admirers of his to form a new society, which Rama refused to do, saying that all societies working in India were his own societies and that he would work through them.

Rama's whole being is submerged in 'OM' omnipotent, omnipresent, omnicient, nothing without it or beyond it.

Rama did so much in so little span of 33 years as was done by Adi Shankaracharya, Christ, Sant Gyaneshwar and Swami Vivekanand and to quote a few. There can be no comparison, which is futile.

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ISLAM & VEDANT

Truth is your Birth-right. Assert it and be master of universe. Truth is 'Tattvamasi'—'That thou art'.

—Swami Rama

A SESSION WITH MUSLIM REPRESENTATIVES

Part-I

It was in the year 1905 that Swami Rama happened to be in Lucknow. Rama was God-intoxicated and attracted cross-sections of society. In his discourses Rama allayed their doubts and fears and told them to stick to Truth-Practical Vedanta. 'AHAM BRAHMASMI' was not only his sermon, but he himself was so. There is nothing but God, he realized and that he was.

During his sojourn at Lucknow, a few representatives of Muslims called on him. They had many doubts and misgivings not only about their religion—the Islam, but also about the Hindu religion. Rama met them, talked with them, dispelled their apprehensions and enlightened them what is Truth.

When these representatives came to see Rama, Rama was sitting in the room he was staying in with his natural charm in meditative and self-realized mood. He openly greeted them as his own self and welcomed them with his mantram 'OM', thus started the discourse of the session.

Muslim Representative : Swami Ji, we all said 'Adabarz' to you. But in reply to our salutations, you only said, OM. Is there any secret in it?

Rama **:** There is no enigma or mystery in any word of *Rama*. *Rama* says every thing with an open heart without any mystification or reservation. Plain talk is easily understandable, while, if it is complicated or tangled, it is likely to be misinterpreted. The truth is that a person can give to others only what he possesses. *Rama* has only 'OM' with him. This 'OM' is his food, drink, sleep, sagacity, talent, thoughtfulness and everything else. This is all that *Rama* possesses.

This non-dualism or monoism is the Vedanta of *Rama*. He has nothing else with him. This is all that he can give to any one.

Query : Kindly explain it further, so that it may become clearer to us.

Rama : As a matter of fact, God is nameless. But the devotees, the *Pandits*, the *Imams*, the clergy and the learned people call Him by various names, according to their angles of vision. Some call him *Rama*, some *Rahim*, some call Him *Krishna*, some *Karim*. Some call Him by the name of *Ishwara* and some by the name of God, *Allah* or *Khuda*. Some respect Him as their Father and some love Him as their Mother. There are some who take God to be their friend or companion, while there are others who regard Him as their Master, Lord or Creator and bow before Him in servility. Some pay respect to Him as their husband while others, taking Him to be their preceptor, *Guru*, *Pir* or *Murshid*, surrender themselves to Him. And, there are some who regard Him as their own self. They establish their relations with Him, according to their own understanding and propensity.

In this country, as you all know, it is customary that *wives* or *husbands* do not see each other before their marriage. But after their marriage, they are so much attached to one another as if they are one. In order to realize this unity, they neither count beads for repeating the names of their partner, nor observe any ritual like prayer or *Namaz*. This oneness, comes to them automatically. Similarly, you can feel your oneness with God by establishing some sort to relation with Him. You can call Him by any name you like. You can develop any kind of alliance with Him. But Truth or Reality is only one. All these different names or relations point to the same Reality, the One without a second. He is what He is. In other words, He is indescribable and beyond being defined or circumscribed in words. But the ancient *Rishis* and *Saints* have called Him and known Him through the significant symbol

OM. It signifies His all pervasive universalism, which includes your own SELF.

Query : When God has hundreds and thousands of names, why should only this word OM be so dear to you?

Rama : The question appears to be rather simple, it requires a deep insight. Books after books can be written on 'OM'. But it would be quite in the fitness of things at the moment if it is said that this is the most natural name of God. It is universal. Every person, of whatever caste, creed or nationality he may be, is coursed by OM and benefits from repeating it.

Query : How?

Rama : By pronouncing it properly, the heart and the mind are filled with peace, tranquility and bliss. You can feel the limitless ocean of power and energy within you. In order to acquire and possess this invaluable treasure of Nature's Bliss and Peace, OM works as a key to unlock the coffer. This is no exaggeration. You can verify it now and here and benefit instantly, by filling your heart with peace, tranquility and blissful serenity. Truth is self-evident. *Rama* invites you to join the blissful melody of OM with him to enjoy the refreshing and invigorating bath in the Ganga of Peace and Serenity.

(After so saying, Rama sang the mantram OM, thrice in his all-absorbing melody. All the Muslims present there, also joined him in the singing of OM. After this, there was silence for some time.)

Rama : Well, please, speak out your own personal experience of singing OM with *Rama*.

Answer : Swami ji, we did feel a sort of peace and concentration of mind.

Rama : It is because of this that the *Hindus* blow the conch shell on all the occasions. It may be for a birth or death, for *Puja* or any other happy celebration. They blow this conch shell even on the eve of the declaration of war. The conch shell, when blown, gives out the sound of OM which diverges in the space

to spread peace, concentration and self-confidence in the atmosphere. This stimulates the heart to be merged in Godhood. The feeling of 'mine and thine' begins to melt and the mind is concentrated only on OM, to signify God.

The word OM does not belong to any particular language. It is not the monopoly of Sanskrit language. This sound is found practically in all the languages including Persian, English, German and Japanese.

ओ३म् की फुकनी में बादे जां को भर कर दम बदम ।

फूंकते हैं हर घड़ी इक आग भड़काने को हम ॥

In the pipe of OM, we blow in every breath, our life-force to keep the fire of spiritualism burning all the time.

The sound of OM, filling the entire atmosphere, gives immediate relief to humanity. It has been with you, since your birth. When a child is born, his first cry resembles with the sound of OM. When the children play and their minds are saturated with happiness, they produce a noise which is akin to that of OM. When people fall sick or are affected with some unbearable pain, they invariably groan which is a replica of the sound resembling OM. This gives them relief from their agonising pain.

At the end of the prayers in Jewish, English or Arabian languages, the word *Amen*, or *Amin*, is uttered. It is nothing but the changed form of OM. The last word of the Greek language is *Omega* which has the prominence of OM. Also, in the English words, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, the eminence of OM is distinct. The presence of OM in these words is not just by change. It is on account of the word OM that these words give the indication of universalism.

Now the question is, why is this sound uttered by the human beings in woes, worries, pain, afflictions and illness? The reason is that OM is like a huge tree, casting its cool shadow all around and providing peaceful and refreshing relief and energy to all those suffering from the scorching heat of pain, affliction,

worry, anxiety, etc. All their troubles are, as it were, evaporated. This relief is experienced by them, even when they utter OM in a haphazard way. But if they repeat it in all sincerity, in a proper and feelingful way, they will be immensely benefited and their entire life will be metamorphosed.

The Hindu Philosophers regard OM as the only Reality, the unchangeable Truth, which remains the same in all the circumstances – in the waking, dreaming or deep sleep state, wherein this gross world is entirely lost. In the changing scenario of this world, OM alone is changeless. This is the Soul of the universe. It is only due to this OM that the entire universe is working harmoniously, according to Laws of Nature. All those who act according to these Laws of Nature are protected by the Divine Power of OM and remain happy and progressive, while those who oppose these Laws are crushed by the wheel of Nature. There can be nothing beyond this universal entity, OM. He is all pervading, like water in ice, like iron in a sword or like gold in gold ornaments. He is All in all.

The miraculous show of this universe is due to Him. Not only do the different sects of Hinduism attach importance to this OM, but the Bible and the Koran also make a specific mention of OM, indicating its universalism.

Query : We, *Muslims*, have never seen any mention of OM in our holy scriptures. Can you please quote any reference of OM in our Koran?

Rama : Please listen attentively. In the very beginning of your Koran, at the top, there are three letters, Alif (A) Lam (l) and Mim (M). Can any one of you explain what these three letters mean?

Answers : This is a secret which Allah has kept to himself. (At this, *Rama* laughts heartily).

Rama : When God has revealed the entire Koran for the benefit of mankind, as the *Muslims* claim, it is very strange that He has kept its very heading a secret. No, it is not so. If you, the *Muslims*, who repose

full faith in the Koran do not know the secret of the letters A.L.M., *Rama* will tell you what they signify. The letters Alif (A), Lam (L) and Mim (M) are nothing but Alif (A) Wao (O) and Mim (M) i.e. A, O, M or OM.

Query : Swami Ji, Lam is Lam i.e. L is L. It is not clear how Lam (L) can be pronounced as Wao (O), as you have done.

Rama : Yes. Lam (L) can be pronounced as Wao (O), according to your own Arabic grammar, under certain circumstances. Please listen to *Rama* and try to understand what he says. In the Arabic language, you write Shamsaldin but you read it as Samsuddin. You write Nizamaldin but you read it as Nizamuddin. Why do you pronounce Lam (L) as Wao (O) or (U)? Does not Lam (L) become silent here and give the sound of Wao (O or U)? According to the Arabic grammar, when Lam (L) comes between a vowel and a consonant, it becomes silent and gives the sound of Arabic Pesh (O or U). Similar is the case here with Alif (A), Lam (L) and Mim (M). Here Lam (L) is in between the vowel Alif (A) and the consonant Mim (M) and therefore it becomes silent and gives the sound of O or U. Accordingly, Alif, Lam and Mim give the sound of Alif (A) Wao (O or U) and Mim (M) i.e. AOM or AUM. This is nothing but OM. This is no secret of God. It is your own ignorance that you do not try to understand your own Koran correctly. It is clearly and unambiguously OM and nothing but OM.

Muslim Representative : Swami Ji, your arguments and the reasonings have surprised us.

Rama : There should be no surprise. Your very Arabic grammar makes it quite clear. God is not to blame, if the Muslims themselves do not try to understand it correctly. It is *Kufra*, heretical or a sin to blame God for keeping it a secret and not disclosing it to the mankind. It appears that the erudite and learned *Muslims* themselves either do not understand it or, if they do, they want to keep it a secret from the Muslim masses who are generally ignorant of the Arabic language in which the Koran has been written.

Query : You have just used the word, *Kufra*! May we know as to how you interpret the words *Kufra* or *Kafir*?

Rama : These words, *Kufra* and *Kafir* are the special words of the Islam. You can understand the meaning of these words better than any non-Muslim. It is not for *Rama* to say anything about them.

Muslim Representative : Since you are very learned and well-versed both in Persian and Arabic languages, we would like to know your opinion in this regard. Kindly do oblige us.

Rama : It would have been better if you had not put this question to *Rama*, because, *Rama* speaks Truth and loves Truth much more than any thing else. *Rama* neither flatters anybody, nor injures the feelings of anyone. Truth must prevail and it cannot be crushed. Every religion unveils Truth in one form or the other and *Rama* is, therefore, not only a Hindu, but also a Muslim, a Christian and a Buddhist. In answer to your question *Rama* will speak plainly but with love, without the least intention to injure your feelings. *Rama* loves you all, like his ownself. As such, there should be nothing to hide from his own SELF.

My own SELF, the truth is that the followers of the Islam have very wrongly interpreted the words *Kufra* and *Kafir* and they have also made a very wrong use of these words.

As you know, the heart of man is the seat of God. It is a great virtue to be kind to others. A Muslim poet says in Persian :

दिल बदस्त-आवर कि हज्जे अकबर अस्त।

To keep others' heart pleased is a great virtue, like the pilgrimage to Haj.

But unfortunately, the so-called leaders of the Islam injected hatred, alienation, prejudice and virulence into the hearts of the ignorant *Muslims*, instead of preaching love for God or brotherhood of man.

The history written by the Muslims themselves

testifies and corroborates the fact that lakhs of non-Muslims were butchered in whole-sale massacres, in the name of Islam. Thousands of villages were burnt to ashes by the invading Muslim armies. What brutal tyranny, intolerable harshness, absolute despotism and ruthless oppression did they not inflict on the non-Muslims in the name of the Islam, due to the misinterpretation of the words, *Kufra* and *Kafir*.

They burnt the non-Muslims alive. They did not spare even the women and the children. History says that they buried in the brick-wall the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh of only eight and ten years of age, when they resolutely refused to accept the Islam. They rode rough shod over all those who ever dared challenge the autocratic and dictatorial bigotry of the Muslims. With only a few noble exceptions, a very great majority of the Muslims treated the non-Muslims, as kafirs. This is against the very tenets of Islam which literally means the 'Religion of Peace.' Yet in the very name of God and His peaceful religion, Islam, the human beings living in His own creation were annihilated and mercilessly cut down, under the sword of bigotry and fanaticism of the ignorant Muslims. Lakhs of non-Muslims were taken as prisoners and made to say good-bye to their hearths and homes, to be sold in the Muslim countries as slaves to serve their masters for their whole life. Lakhs of helpless women were made widows. They were raped and used to satisfy the lust of the guardians of the Islam. By the misuse of the words *Kufra* and *Kafir*, millions of innocent children were rendered orphans and forced to lead a life of immorality by the soldiers of the Islam. What is all this for? Is this Islam, the Religion of peace? Is terrorism the only way to make people accept the Islam?

This is what your own history says. This is what the world has seen of the Islam. This is what the Indians have experienced. This is not the teaching of the Islam, the Religion of Peace. It is due to the wrong interpretation of the words, *Kufra* and *Kafir*.

Rama has no ill-will against anyone. He knows that the Muslim masses are misinformed and that, taking advantage of their ignorance of the Arabic language in which the Holy Koran has been written, they are still being misled by their fanatic and selfish leaders, in order to retain their supremacy over of the illiterate and simple-minded Muslims. You will please excuse *Rama* for plain-speaking, not out of any hatred but because of his selfless love for you. He is your sincere well-wisher. Nay, he is your own SELF.

Rama's heart aches when he sees all this in the name of the Islam and against the Farman of the Prophet who was true and sincere devotee of God. He could not have allowed his followers to unjustly and ruthlessly butcher the innocent creation of his own God in his very name and in the name of the Islam, the religion which pronounces to establish peace on earth. But, after the death of the Prophet, not only non-Muslims but even his own son-in-law, Hazrat Ali, and his (Prophet's) grandsons were mercilessly and unjustly massacred by the Muslim despots, due to their vested interests, under the abominable intoxication of their false pride and prestige.

You, who are here, form the cream of the Muslim community and are also their leaders in this city of Lucknow. *Rama* would like you to go the Muslim masses and explain to them the true spirit of the Islam-Peace, Amity, total surrender and abnegation to God, as preached and propagated by the Koran, so that they may live in harmony and love with their non-Muslim neighbours, who have been created by your own God or Allah, in an unprejudiced way, without any rivalry or hatred. Tell them to live in peace with all. This will be a great service not only to the Islam but to the humanity.

According to you, the Islam means 'Peace'. The Islam means total resignation to God. According to the tenets of the Islam, a Muslim must bow down to the will of God in all the circumstances, favourable or

adverse. He must maintain equanimity of his mind and remain peaceful, taking all the circumstances to be the will of God. According to an Urdu poet :

We must submit ourselves to the Will of God.

We must be content and happy in all the circumstances. The Islam teaches you to surrender yourself completely to God. You must be happy, even if He kills you or keeps you alive. He may drown you or save you from the tempest. A Muslim, if he is at all a Muslim, must remain peaceful and serene. Truly, he alone is the real man who is happy in all the circumstances. *Nazir*, a poet of Agra, says :

पूरे हैं वही मर्द जो हर हाल में खुश हैं।
मैदान में बाजार में चौपाल में खुश हैं।
गर यार की मर्जी हुई घर छोड़ के बैठे,
घर बार छुड़ाया तो उसे छोड़ के बैठे।
गुदड़ी जो उढ़ाई तो उसे ओढ़ के बैठे,
अरु शाल उढ़ाया तो उसी शाल में खुश हैं।
पूरे हैं वही मर्द, जो हर हाल में खुश हैं।

They alone are the perfect men who are happy in all the circumstances.

They are happy in the plain, in the market or in the choupal.

If He desires them to leave the house, they obey Him.

If God keeps them in rags, they have no objection.

If God gives them a Shawl to cover their bodies, they are happy in that too.

In short they are happy in all the circumstances.

Though the Islam teaches us how to live in peace with others but, it has earned a bad name itself in the world history for spreading the religion through tyranny, oppression and despotism. It was so because of the selfishness, personal gain and narrow outlook of the Muslim autocrats, intoxicated with their domination and conquest, in the name of the Islam. It is all due to the wrong interpretation of the words, *Kufra* and *Kafir*.

All those, whom you call *Kafir*s or heretics and therefore hate them, have also been created by your own God. There are no two Gods, the one for the Muslims and the other for the non-Muslims. God is only One and He is the Lord of all the different worlds in this universe, as your Koran says. Even in a kafir (heretic) the same God is present who is in you. According to your own Koran, God is nearer to you than your aorta. No one can be declared a *Kafir* just because one does not worship your God or offer prayers, as you do. Religion teaches large-heartedness and not narrow-mindedness, selfishness or sectarianism. The purpose of a religion is to establish your relation with God. Is it not so? And God, as you know, is not limited to Muslims only. He equally belongs to all, the Muslims and the non-Muslims. God is everything for a true follower of the Islam. God alone is his object of worship. And, since God is omnipresent, he sees God every where, both in *Kafir* and Muslim. According to a Persian Poet :

मजहबे इश्क अज हवां मित जुदास्त।
आशिकां रा मजहबो, मिल्लत खुदास्त।।

The religion of a real devotee of God is quite different from the orthodoxy and bigotry of others. For him, his religion is only (the omnipresent) God.

The Islam directs you to have respect for the religions of others as well, because God is the final aim of all the religions. Those who are not Muslims have been called Zimmi in the Islam, i.e., those whose responsibility is that of God. As such it is the bounden duty of the Muslims and the Muslim rulers to protect them and to safeguard their freedom. It is none of their responsibility to interfere in their non-Muslim way of worship or faith. It is God's responsibility to deal with them as He likes. Who are you to take God's work in your own hands? You have only to mind your own business. That is all. There was a monastery, called Saint Catherine, near the mount Senai. The Prophet Mohammad in the sixth year of Hijri issued a directiv

that all those who betray any carelessness in protecting the Christians or the non-Muslims would be severely punished. It was also ordered by the Prophet that the Muslims should ensure safety and security of the Churches and other places of worship of the non-Muslims. They were also ordered to extend their help in the repairs of such buildings.

What does the above order of the Prophet Mohammad indicate? It clearly shows that the Islam orders every follower of the Islam to remain in peace with all others and to let others also live in peace. The Islam allows the Muslims neither to be prejudiced, under blind faith, against the non-Muslims nor to hate them or tyrannise them, by indulging in general massacres. Communal riots in the name of religion are carried out only by those who have neither studied their scriptures carefully nor understood them correctly. In all fairness, every person should have complete freedom to worship his God in his own way, according to his liking and propensity.

A shepherd was looking after the grazing of the flock of his sheep in a jungle. He was addressing his God in his own simple way. He was saying, "O God, I have heard that Thou art very beautiful. If only once Thou could showeth Thy face, I would offer Thee milk of my best sheep. If there are any thorns in Thy soles, I would pick them and take them all out. I would rub out all dirt and impurity of Thy back, I would pick up all the lice out of Thy head. I would serve Thee with all my heart, if Thou could showeth Thy face only once, only once."

When that shepherd was talking to his God in his simple but sincere way, Moses happened to pass that way. When he heard the shepherd making that sort of prayer to God, he lost his temper. "That is enough. Will you keep quiet now? I can no more tolerate such an insult to God. Does God need the milk of your sheep? Do the thorns prick His soles? Could there be any uncleanliness on His back? Does He have any lice

in His hair?" Saying this he gave the shepherd a severe blow with his staff. The shepherd cried out in pain. Immediately Moses heard the voice of God, "O Moses, what have you done? It is unjust and unfair. Every body is free to worship Me in his own way. Who are you to stand between Me and My devotee? You were sent to this world to induce people to be united to Me and not to separate them from Me. By hurting that shepherd, you have committed a great sin."

Hazrat Moses was very much ashamed and he apologised to the shepherd.

Rama has great respect and regard for the Islam. But he is pained to see that its followers, the Muslims, especially in India, have not only misused the words, *Kufra* and *Kafir* in the name of their peaceful religion, but have also indulged in all sorts of sins, murders, butchery, blood-shed, rape, hatred, jealousy, spite prejudice etc., against the non-Muslims, their own fellow-beings and the creation of their own God or Allah. It is not the non-Muslims but the so-called Muslims themselves, who have defamed and vilified their own simple, veracious and unfeigned religion which preaches peace on earth. They have themselves presented an ugly image of their God-fearing and simple religion before the world due to the wrong interpretation of the words—*Kufra* and *Kafir*.

According to the Indian Muslims in general, *Kafir* is one who is not a Muslim. But this interpretation is absolutely wrong. It is for this reason that wherever they went, they, in their zeal to spread their religion, perpetrated tyranny, blood-shed and oppression. All this is against the fundamental principles of the Islam—the Peace and the total resignation to the all-pervading God.

Dear friends, the literal meaning of *Kufra* is to hide. What? To hide Truth or Reality is *Kufra* and he who hides Truth is *Kafir*.

How does a *Kafir* hide Truth? He hides it behind the curtain of his Khudi or ego which has its roots

in selfishness. In other words, the person, who asserts his ego or selfishness, as against Truth, is *Kafir*. And what is Truth? Truth is that which remains the same, yesterday, today and forever. But Truth or Reality is only one. It is only God who is immortal, eternal and imperishable. Therefore, the person who does not implement this Truth is his daily life and who, instead, lays stress on his ego or selfishness in his worldly dealings, is, as if, hiding God, the Truth, behind the curtain of his egoism. In other words, he remains unconcerned with God, as if there is no God for him. By such an attitude, he commits *Kufra* and deserves to be called a *Kafir*.

To realize God is to see His hand in everything, in every work, in every dealing and in all the circumstances, favourable or unfavourable, with total resignation to His will. This is Godliness. This is made simpler and easier, if you take care to obey His precept or mandate, which means to act according to the Laws of Nature, physical, mental and spiritual. Such a man alone can claim to be called a *Momin* or the real devotee of God. One who is steeped in selfishness or egoism deserves to be called a *Kafir*. Such a man practises only selfishness and ignores Godliness. The more a man indulges in selfishness, the bigger *Kufra* he commits and the greater *Kafir* he becomes. And God, according to His laws, inflicts due punishment on him for his *Kufra* or sins. Now, it is for you to judge what is *Kufra* and who can be called a *Kafir*. Mere utterance of Kalma without practising it in your daily life will not help you. It will not absolve you of your sins or selfishness. You have to change your selfishness into selflessness or Godliness.

It is painful that the protagonists of the Islam, due to their blind faith and bigotry have brought bad name to their simple and unostentatious religion, causing havoc and devastation in the world, on account of misinterpretation and the wrong use of the words *Kufra* and *Kafir*. According to them a non-Muslim is

a *Kafir*, howsoever a God-intoxicated or truly religious-minded he may be. As such, it is wrong to assert that a so–called Muslim has every right to do away with a non-Muslim, if the latter does not believe in Prophet Mohammad, or the Koran, as if he, the non-Muslim, has not been created by the same God. It is also said that a Muslim will be forgiven by God for his sins just because he is a formal Muslim. This is a popular belief amongst the Muslim masses. All this misbelief or blind faith is against the fundamental principles of the Islam. The fact is that cruelty due to narrow-mindedness does not behove those who profess that the Islam is the religion of peace.

It is now for you to assess, how reasonable, just and fair it is to preach to the ignorant Muslim masses segregation in the name of the Islam Religion, which teaches universal love, sympathy, brotherhood, unity and not disunity or hatred. It is, therefore, most essential for all of us including, *Hindus*, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, to live together with love and unity. The entire universe is one because of the direct connection with God, the Creator of the universe. If your God has made them take birth in the non-Muslim families, who are you to shed their blood, annihilate them or hate them after branding them as *Kafirs*? How do you justify yourself in finding fault with God's doing? How dare you interfere in His planning?

Does the Sun bestow amiable and genial light only on the Muslims and the scorching heat and blinding glaze on the non-Muslims? Is the moon pleasant only to the Muslims and painful or dolorous to the non-Muslims? Does the air give energy only to the Muslims and become offensive or suffocating to the non-Muslims? Does the virulent and epidemic plague infect and envenom only the non-Muslims and not the Muslims or the Momins? Does God allow rain to fall only on the fields of Muslims and not on those of the non-Muslims? Does He shower hail storm only in the fields of the non-Muslims and not in those of the

Muslims? O, dear friends! According to your own Koran, all are equal in the eyes of God who is the Rabbul-Almin, the Lord of all the worlds. We all emanate from Him. We all are His sons. Will God be ever pleased with you to see His sons being massacred by the Muslims in His very name? No father can be happy to see this cruelty of the Muslims. Who are you, then, to create differences and disunity in the so-called *Kafirs* and the Momins, when God is common to all? Please reflect, if you yourself are a real Momin? Are you not a *Kafir* yourself, if you deny God and act with selfish motives? This is certainly not the teachings of the Islam, the 'Religion of Peace'.

Rama regrets to say all this. *Rama* has great respect and regard for the Islam, due to its simplicity and direct faith in God and, he takes Muslims as his own self. *Rama* says with love what he thinks to be right from his own experience and observation, because it is sin to hide any thing from his own dear ones. If he is wrong, he may be corrected. *Rama* will have the least objection to this.

Muslim Representative : We have learnt a lot from the correct interpretation of the words *Kufra* and *Kafir*. We promise to explain to our brothron the fundamental principles and doctrines of the Islam, as preached by our holy scripture, Koran. You will be glad to know that in this city of Lucknow, there has been no communal riot in our living memory. Here we, the Muslims and the Hindus, live side by side with no communal feeling and participate in each others' celebrations.

In this connection we would also like to have your own opinion about our Kalma which is the gist of our Islamic teachings!

***Rama* :** Very well. Since you desire *Rama* to express his opinion on the Islamic Kalma, he will gladly do so. Your Islamic Kalma is, no doubt, the gist not only of the Islam, but can also form the core of all the religions which believe in God, provided it is interpreted rightly. The original Kalma says, *"La-Ilah-Illilah"*. It means that "there is nothing but Allah or God". An Urdu poet says :

जिधर देखता हूँ खुदा ही खुदा है।
खुदा से नहीं कोई शै भी जुदा है।।

"All this is God and nothing but God. Because nothing can exist independent of God."

The so-called protagonists of the Islam have misinterpreted this Kalma. In *Rama*'s opinion they have annihilated the very spirit of the Islam, by their ignorance and incomprehension. According to them, the meaning of the Kalma is, "there is only one God." Well, if this interpretation of the Moulvies is taken as final, there is nothing new in the Islam, because every religion preaches that there is one and only one God.

Vedanta says that "there is only one God or *Brahma* and that there is no duality at all". It means that there is only God and God alone in this universe and that there is nothing else but God. He is All in all, He is one with all. He is all pervading and interpenetrating. Nothing could be beyond God. He is in everything and everything is in Him. Your Koran also says that God is nearer to you than your own aorta.

He is not only nearer than your own aorta but He is nearer than the aorta of every being. The Muslims admit that God is Omnipresent and Omniscient. He is universal. He is present in every particle of the universe. He is present in the minutest imaginable part of every particle. It means that it is all God and that nothing could be anything but God. If, however, there is any thing separate from God, or besides God, it will mean that that thing has limited God. But since God is limitless and infinite, nothing can limit Him. It is a sin to say that God has been limited by something else. My dear ones, please do not be deluded that God is limited. Every thing is included in the limitlessness and omnipresence of God. Your Koran says, *"Allah Akbar"*. It means that God is great, that He is so great

that it is beyond our imagination and that He covers every thing big or small. He is All in all.

Your *Vahdaniyat* means monoism, that is non-dualism. It means that in this whole universe, there is only one God, that there is no duality and that there is nothing but Allah. The interpretation of your Kalma by your Moulvies is that there is only one God. It is not correct. It really means that there is nothing but one omnipresent God in the universe.

An Urdu Poet says :

जहां देखता हूं खुदा ही खुदा है।

As far as I can see, I see nothing but God.

Dear friends, the true lover of God is the one who feels His presence everywhere. He sees His beloved everywhere. He feels from the bottom of his heart that there is nothing else but He.

Another Urdu Poet says :

माशूक का रुत्बा तो महशर में कोई देखे।
अल्लाह भी मजनूं को लैला नजर आता है।

"Please mark the importance of the beloved on the day of judgement. Even God appears to be none other than Laila to Majnu (the lover of Laila)."

This is not a poetic expression. The person, whose heart and mind are fully saturated with the omnipresence of God, cannot see any thing but God. The truth is that the real devotee, who practically feels the presence of God in every thing cannot feel or see anything other than God. And he alone can be called a true devotee of God, otherwise it is all a show, a mockery or impersonation.

Another poet says :

जनूने इश्क हो ऐसा कि आलमगीर हो जाए।
जिधर ही मैं नज़र डालूं तू ही तू इक नज़र आए।।

"O God, my infatuation for Thee should be universal so that, wherever I might see, I could see Thee and Thee alone".

The ideas of myself and yourself, mine and thine, this and that and all the dualism be completely obliterated. Only God may remain in my thoughts,

words and deeds, because God is the only Reality. He alone exists and persists. All else is changeable and unreal. When God is present in the minutest portion of the minutest particle, where is the room for the separate existence of anything else? He is in *zarra-zarra*, fully saturating everything, like iron in a sword. There in no room for selfishness or egoism in the universalism of God. It is all He and He alone. The man who does not accept this Reality is a *Kafir*, even though he may be born in a Muslim family.

There is one more important feature in your present day Kalma.

It has two portions. The first one is *'La-illah-illillah'*, which means, "There is nothing but Allah or God." This aspect has just been discussed. The other portion of the Kalma is, "*Mohammad Rasool Allah*", meaning that "*Mohammad* is the prophet of God". You may or may not agree with *Rama*, but it is generally felt that this portion had been added after the death of Mohammad Saheb, so that he may not be forgotten in course of time.

As you all know, Hazrat Mohammad Saheb was a very simple and God-intoxicated person. He never liked ostentatiousness. He never liked his personal publicity and individual advertisement. He himself, his conduct, his career and, as a matter of fact, his every thing, belonged to God. He, too, never considered himself to be different from God, because he had totally surrendered himself to Him. He was all God's. Nothing of his was separate from God. As such he could not have allowed during his life time his individual name or identity to be added to the original Kalma that emphasises that "there is nothing but Allah."

Then again, according to the Islam, God is "Wahduhoo-La-Sharik" i.e., He is all One without any partner or sharer. How, then, could Hazrat Mohammad have allowed his name to be added to God, even as a friend or a Prophet, when God is All in all, and when He is said to be limitless? No separate identity or

personality, even that of a friend, can be there to limit Him. It, therefore, appears that the latter part of the Kalma has been added by his devotees and admirers out of their intense love for Mohammad Saheb, after his death, in order to perpetuate his memory so long as the Islam continues to flourish in this world. *Rama* is not inclined to refute this view. It does not matter whether you agree with him or not, because he has no desire to force his ideas on anybody. Every person has full right to act according to his own views. *Rama* has indicated his point of view, because you had desired him to do so.

Muslim Representative : Swami Ji, your discussions may not be controverted. But being a Sufi (Vedanti), the flight of your vision is high. Therefore, you measure the life-incidents of Hazrat Mohammad with the same yard-stick. Our intellect may accept your version, but our hearts are reluctant to do so. As Muslims, we cannot go against what our forefathers had been telling us. You may call it our blind faith. But Hazrat Mohammad Saheb deserves all our respect. You are a Sufi (Vedanti) and, as such, you may be entitled to say Hamaost (I am He). But we have not yet been able fully to define our relation with God, as His devotees (Bhakta and Bhagwan or Abid and Mabood). Will it not be a sin or *Kufra* for us to say Anal-Haq (I am God), as the Sufis (Vedantis) do? We cannot even dare change the present form of Kalma.

Rama : The truth is that *Rama*, being a Vedanti (a sufi), is convinced that there is nothing but God and that "I am God; as all others are." Reality is only One. God is Infinite. That which is Infinite cannot be rendered finite by anything separate from Him. He covers every thing and, therefore, it is not a sin to say, "I am God". But it is certainly a great sin to reject Reality just to project yourself as separate from or other than God.

A poet says :

खुदा में खुदी को जो देता है दख़ल है।
वह मुन्किर व काफ़िर है और बे-अक़ल है॥

"The man who thrusts his ego in God is certainly an atheist, a Kafir and also a fool."

Query : How?

Rama : Why go far to prove this factual statement? You can take the example of your own body to realize this Reality. Is not God present in every cell of your body? As such, even your body is not separate from God. That which is not separate from God is one with Him. It is only on account of the presence of God that your eyes can see, your ears can hear, your nose can smell or your mind can feel. Without His power within, you cannot do any thing. When you are in a deep sleep state, your ego or your limited self is absent. Even at that time, God continues to work in your body, during your senselessness or deep-sleep state? God does all this not only in your body, but also in the bodies of all other living beings. Please reflect. It means that it is the same God who is doing all this work in the same way in different and separate bodies as in yours. This Power of God is working simultaneously and automatically in all the bodies, as if the bodies of all of us are those of God Himself. But, due to our ignorance, we think that we ourselves are the doers of all these things. We do not think of God at all, in this connection. Our bodies, our wealth, our possessions, our reputation, our wives, children etc. are all due to God. All these are of God Himself. It is a great surprise that we put our claim on all these things, as if they are our private property. O my dear, it is impropriety. It is usurpation of God's things. This is a sin. When God, being omnipresent, infinite and limitless, is all pervading, how can anything remain separate from Him? A drop in the ocean has no entity separate from it. It is all ocean itself.

Query : When all of us are God, it means that

the entire creation is God. And instead of one God, there are millions and billions of Gods in every separate creation.

Rama : Please excuse *Rama* when he says that it is your misunderstanding, if you draw such erroneous conclusion. *Rama* has just given you the example of a drop in the ocean. There are innumerable drops in the ocean, but they are all one with the ocean. So too, there are innumerable waves in a sea. They all appear to be separate from each other. Some are high, some low, some big, some small, some standing, some straight. Seemingly they are all separate, but they are all one with the sea. Being seemingly separate, can they be called different oceans or different seas? No, because the same sea-water is common to all the waves or the drops. Similarly, all the different things or beings are, like different waves, one with the same limitless ocean of Godhood. They are all one with the all-pervading God. In all these different worldly objects the common power of the same God is working simultaneously, like water in the waves or drops in the ocean. You can, therefore, see for yourself that these different worldly objects can never be called different Gods. Just as in different waves, the same water of the ocean is permeating all through, so, too, the same God is present in every atom of this universe. Things may appear to you to be different, yet they are all one with the same Infinite and all-pervading God.

Query : If it is all God and nothing but God, why then, are the people in this world sinners? God, as you know, is pure and free of sins. Why and how are they sinful, when God is present in every one of them?

Rama : *Rama* may remind you that your own Koran says that God is nearer to you than your own aorta. It means that God is present in every being. Now with reference to your own Koran, it is for you to say why there should be any sin in human beings. If you try to see everything through the Godly vision, you will see nothing but God and God alone.

Query : This is a paradox, Please elucidate it.

Rama : It is not a paradox but it seems to be rather complicated, while it is not so.

Some people, according to their holy scriptures, believe that, in the very beginning of the creation, Adam and Eve indulged in sin, and the human beings, who are their descendants, inherited the same in their own generations. They also believe that on the recommendations of their preceptor or prophet, all their sins will be excused. This reasoning of their is not to be believed by the present day intellectuals. This is not only a blind faith, but is also baseless. During these days of scientific outlook and hair-splitting logic, such an explanation can only be considered irrational.

You know that we have not reached the present stage of civilization all at once. We have developed slowly and slowly to the present stage of our evolution. The student, studying today for his Master's degree was once reading in the class three, but slowly he reached the M.A. class, after passing various lower classes in the school and the college. He could not have reached the M.A. class all at once. Today you are, no doubt, fifty or sixty years old and the world considers you to be a learned, wise and experienced person. But there was a time when you were sucking milk as an innocent and brainless baby. And gradually you developed into a boy, a young man, a middle-aged man and today you are considered to be a respectable gentleman, full of wisdom and experience.

Similarly, according to the profound and faultless experience and deep observation, man as we see him today, has not evolved all of a sudden. Slowly by gradual evolution, he developed after passing through a series of lower animal kingdoms. Even after developing into a man, the evolution has not ended. We are still evolving. In the beginning as human being we were, then, eating raw meat to satisfy our hunger. When we were further evolved we learnt farming and began to live in the villages and hamlets. On further evolution,

we became more and more wiser and learnt to read and write. And, we are now gradually developing science and technology. We are now getting less and less selfish and more charitable and philanthropic in our out-look. In this way we are constantly progressing on our path of evolution.

The modern science, with its valuable experiments, has proved that we could become human beings, after passing through various lower stages of ignorance, or through gradual process of evolution. You go to the gynaecological museum of any modern medical college and you will know that nature repeats itself and that from the very day of the pregnancy of a lady, the form of the embryo continues to change from a very small ovum to a fish, a snake, a frog, a cat, a dog, a monkey etc., till it finally develops into the form of a human being. All these different stages of evolution are exhibited and preserved in separate bottles in such museums.

Even after developing into human beings, we continue to evolve. As our limited selfishness gives way to universalism, we will move towards still higher evolution. Evolution is limitless. This limitlessness takes us to God Himself. In other words, a man has to evolve himself with a firm resolve to reach the universalism of God-Realization. He has, thus, to realize his oneness with all and be All in all. This is to rise above limited selfishness and to expand it to the universal self which is all pervading.

That is how we have continued to evolve from the animal kingdom to the human beings. But, since the primitive man has just evolved from the lower animals, their habits are still persisting in him. These habits are instinctive and natural in the animals, but they do not behave a man. In Urdu it is called 'Haivaniyat' or animalism, if a man acts like an animal. But a man, with his rationalism is not expected to be selfish or instinctive like animals. This selfishness is the root cause of all the sins. Irrational instincts like anger, greed, rivalry, spite, jealousy, hatred, passions,

emotions are natural in the animals alone. What is food for one is poison for the other. Any of these sins in a man indicates that he still retains the nature of animals in him.

Thus, you will, please, mark that to rise above animalism is to be above sin. And, to be above sin is to save yourself from the woes, worries, troubles, afflictions etc. These sins do not let you evolve. To advance or to evolve is called the virtue and to remain backward or to fall down is called the sin. It may be explained in a still simpler way. Suppose you are standing on a ladder. To go up on the higher rung is a virtue and to go lower down is a sin. Therefore, the more a man rises above his selfishness or egoistic tendencies, the more virtuous he becomes.

As explained earlier, man is a rational being. The more he develops rationalistic view, through his physical, mental and spiritual knowledge, the more evolved and advanced he becomes. He thus becomes less selfish and advances closer to Nature or God, by gradually increasing his circle of love and one-ness with all. He will, then, step by step, feel himself to be All in all.

At the root of all the sins is the ignorance of real knowledge. This ignorance causes selfishness which, in turn, as a natural consequence, arouses in him the feelings of dualism which are responsible for pride, differentiation, separatism, hatred, spite, etc. This sort of mentality indicates that animalism is still, more or less, present in the person concerned. With the gradual removal of this ignorance, man advances towards the goal of human life. Such a person would be gradually imbibing the Nature or God, Sat-Chit-Anand, i.e., Eternity, Consciousness and Bliss. This selfishness or ego does not let us evolve to realize Goodhood. An Urdu poet says:

न होती गर ख़ुदी हम में तो जो तू था वही हम थे।
ये पर्दा किस लिये डाला है यारब दर्मियां तू ने॥

"O God, had there been no ego, I would have been

what Thou art. I just do not understand, why Thou has put this curtain of ego between Thyself and myself."

The last Moghal Emperor of India, Bahadur Shah 'Zafar' says :

दिया अपनी ख़ुदी को जो हमने मिटा।
जो वो पर्दा सा बीच में था न रहा।।
रहे पर्दे में अब वो न पर्दा-नशीं।
कोई दूसरा उसके सिवा नहीं रहा।।

"When I have annihilated my ego, the curtain of separation between God and myself is no more.

Now, the invisible Self is no more hidden behind the curtain. And there is none else besides Him."

Therefore, unless we destroy our limited ego or selfishness, which keeps us separated from other, we cannot go near Him, nothing to say about our merger in Him. Another poet says the same thing :

फ़ना बग़ैर बका का पता नहीं चलता,
खुदी बग़ैर मिटाये, ख़ुदा नहीं मिलता।

"Without extermination, you cannot achieve Eternity.

Similarly, without destroying your ego, you cannot realize God."

Take the example of a moth. It is so much enamoured of the candle light that it sacrifices its life to be one with it (light) or to become light personified. An Urdu poet says :

एक ही जस्त में ली मन्ज़िले मक़्सूद उसने।
रह रवो रश्क की जा है, सफ़रे पर्वाना।।

"Only in one leap, it reached the final end of its journey.

O pilgrims on the path of Truth, the journey of the moth is enviable."

If you are at all the true lover of God, and if you want to meet Him, do away with your selfishness and ego and surrender your entire self to God. Now that you are a man, the highest evolved being with rationalism, you must make all-out efforts to rise to the highest rung of evolution. You must now give up

the nature of the lower animals. If not immediately, you have to rise and evolve gradually and expand the circle of your oneness with all. By so doing, you must one day or the other be merged in God-hood, by achieving God-Realization. The flowing river must one day be merged into the ocean. This is the Law. Similarly, you should also make all-out efforts to continue to advance. Do not stop till you have reached the goal of your life. The habits of animals in you keep you back and cause your humiliation and failure. Give up your persisting animalism which is responsible for the sins in human life.

You have emanated from God. God is your primordial cause and your original source. Though you live and are preserved in Him, yet you feel that you are something separate from God. As such, you must first know your real Self to give up this animalism in you, before you can be a perfect man. Then, step by step, you can further evolve to be angelic and finally be merged in God which you really are.

Query **:** Can the sins committed by the *Hindus* be excused? What is your opinion on the point?

Rama **:** According to the Hindu Philosophy the sins can not be washed off on the recommendation of any personality, howsoever big or exalted he may be. Recommendation does not work here. According to the Hindu philosophy, every action or plan is harmonised in accordance with the Law of Nature. No body can be saved from the clutches of these Laws. Here the question of any recommendation does not arise. But if you really repent with sincerity and strong will, you can escape committing such sins again in future. But if you want to be excused for your past sins, you have to destroy your dualism and merge your limited ego in God. Only then can your past sins be destroyed. At that stage, you will no longer be you, nor will your sins remain yours to be suffered by you. They will all be destroyed automatically.

Query : Respected Swami Ji, you had just said that one could not be saved from one's past sins, because one is bound to face their consequences. But now you say that, if one merges one's ego in God, one's sins will be destroyed. Will you kindly elaborate it further as to how this could be possible?

Rama : If a man commits a murder, he is punished. But, if during the pendency of the case, before the pronouncement of the judgement, the murderer dies, his case is dropped and also the capital punishment which was to be awarded to him. Similarly a man commits sins due to his ego. It means that in effect man's ego, the idea of limited soul, the Jiva Bhao or Aham Bhao, commits sins. When this ego, the real sinner is dead, who is to be punished then? With the destruction of the ego, the punishment of the sins has also ended. It is only on account of your ego that you consider yourself to be separate from God. But, when your ego is destroyed or merged in the universal Self or God, you become God yourself. And as God, no sin can touch you and, therefore, the question of any punishment does not rise. As a matter of fact, you are never separate or away from the omnipresent God. It is only your thinking that has kept you away from God. To deny this truth is the biggest sin. Can ice say that it is separate from water? Can a drop in the ocean say that it is separate from it? Can a wave be separate from the sea? No, never. God covers all. This proves that the entire universe is the embodiment of God, like ice in water or drops or waves in an ocean. This is only Truth. God is only Reality—all else is unreal or a delusion.

Query : We would now request you to kindly throw some light on the idol worship of the *Hindus*. We Muslims detest it, What is your opinion about it?

Rama : All the *Hindus* are not idol worshippers. But some of them are. You will please excuse *Rama*, when he says, the idol worship of some of these *Hindus* is more or less like the Taziadari or other similar

practice of the Muslims. The Muslims put flowers and garlands on the Tazias, the paper tombs, symbolising the coffin of the Hazrat Imam Hussain. They also burn incense in front of the Tazias. They also beat their breasts to express their grief and condolences. If some one causes any damage to the Tazia or says something against the custom or convention of the Tazia worship, the Muslims will pounce upon him and even take his life in revenge.

Then again, the Muslims put costly sheets over the graves. You kiss the graves of the dead. You also earnestly pray on the graves to fulfil your desires.

Muslims call the mosques the residence of God, although God is Omnipresent, according to your own Koran. An Urdu poet says :

वायज शराब पीऊंगा मस्जिद में बैठ कर।
या वह जगह बता दे जहां पर खुदा न हो॥

"O preacher, I will drink wine in the Mosque itself, unless you tell me the place where God is not present."

If some one takes even a brick out of the mosque or unknowingly causes even the slightest damage to it, the poor fellow may have to lose his very life.

When the Muslims go to the Kaba for the pilgrimage or Haj in Arabia, they consider it their sacred responsibility, religious obligation and imperative duty to pay respect to a few pieces of stones, called Asvad and kiss them to express their reverence, regard and obeisance. Similarly, Muslims pay extreme respect to the cloth cover (ghilaf) of the Kaba. The Muslims go all the way to Arabia from India and other countries to kneel and bow before the Kaba and circle round and round it, as if God resides only in Kaba and no where else.

The Muslims also worship the wealth and the almighty money currency. They die for their land, estate, property, possessions, assets etc. Is not all this a matter-worship? The worship of matter or materialism is also a kind of idol worship which stands in the way

of a man's worship of Truth or God. All this is the worship of unreality which has never been allowed according to the strict principles of the Islam. But the Muslims in general have no objection to these practices, even though they have been prohibited by the Islam in Koran. All the same, you denounce the so-called idol worship of the *Hindus*. Please try to appreciate these internal notions and intentions and not the outward exteriority. Here *Rama* is reminded of an incident of Sri *Rama Krishna*'s life. He was the preceptor of Swami Vivekanand.

Once Sri Keshab Chandra, head of Brahmo Samaj, went to see Param Hans *Rama Krishna* Ji, He found him all absorbed in concentration in front of the idol of Mother Kali, his ideal. His eyes were closed, tears were rolling down and he was repeating Mother, Mother, Mother. After some time when he opened his eyes, Sri Keshab Chandra said to him, "Param Hans Ji, I respect and honour your intense devotion. But I am unable to appreciate your sitting in front of an idol, made of cow-dung and clay, and weeping like a child, saying, Mother, Mother. It does not behove a great saint like you." Param Hansji said, "You know that a man sees what is saturating his mind. If his mind is filled with the ideas of God, he would see and visualise only God all around himself. But if his mind is saturated with cow-dung and clay, he would see only that in real Mother." On hearing this, Sri Keshab Chandra was very much ashamed and he apologised. Param Hansji was quite right. They, who are stone-minded, only see the stone in the idol and not the virtuous and good points in the character of the erudite hero who is symbolised in the idol. A true Sanatani, therefore, never worships an idol, taking it to be a mere stone. He meditates upon the pervasiveness and the Omnipresence of God, taking the idol to be a mere symbol. A national flag is a mere symbol of the nation. A cross is a mere symbol to remind the Christians of the great sacrifice of Jesus at the altar of Truth. Dear ones, nothing but the

intention counts. The internal feelings and views are more important and weighty than mere exteriority.

The Muslims have great objection to the so-called worship of the idol by the *Hindus*. The idol worship was not in vogue amongst the *Hindus* in the past. It was only in the first century A.D., when the Syrian Christians from Arabia took refuge in India, after their persecution in Syria, that they brought the practice of idol worship in this country. It was due to their influence on the few Indians, who came in their contact, that the practice of idol worship began to spread in India. Despite this, crores of *Hindus* in India do not have any faith in the so-called idol worship.

It would suffice to tell you that in the beginning, persons used to draw inspiration from their ideals represented in the painted pictures, just to ensure that they did not deviate from the tenets of their respective ideals. But in course of time, these pictures were replaced by the idols because, as you know, the stone statues are far more durable and lasting than the pictures on paper or cloth. Thus, they gradually began to adore and respect the statues of their ideals. This may be termed as the idol worship.

It may also be said that the use of the idol is one of the various means to concentrate one's mind. On seeing the statue of some person, his conduct and career become fresh in the mind of the viewer. And by such concentration, the vagrancy of the mind is controlled. It also begins to lose its habit of roaming about. A child first learns to write on a writing board and when his practice is perfected he can write anywhere. Similarly, some practitioners find it convenient to practise the art of concentration, by riveting their eyes upon some idol, preferably that of their ideal. When their practice is matured, they are capable to discern their ideal anywhere. At such a stage of development, they can easily manage to have the vision of their ideal any where they like. But it is not obligatory to develop the power of concentration, only through the

medium of an idol. There can be and there are various practices. God is, as is well-known, everywhere, even in the minutest particle of this universe. But the person who thinks Him to be limited only to an idol, reaches nowhere. Such a narrow out-look is never allowed in the Hindu religion which lays stress on the omnipresence of God.

Query : Another question which agitates is as to why the *Hindus* worship a cow? As a matter of fact, they should worship only God and none else.

Rama : According to the *Hindus* and also from the point of view of the Muslims, God is omnipresent and He is (*Hazir, Nazir*) every where. Your Koran also says, that God is nearer to you than even your own aorta. Accordingly God is present in every cell of the cow also. If, therefore, the *Hindus* worship a cow from this angle of vision, they are not committing any sin. This is only one aspect of the point of view.

A Persian poet says :

लैला रा बचश्म मजनूं वायद दीद।

"Look at Laila, the beloved, through the eyes of Majnu, the lover."

It only means that if you want to understand any Hindu problem, you should do so from the Hindu point of view. They lay emphasis on the omnipresence of God. And, as such, they can worship God even in the minutest particle of this universe. The saying of an Urdu poet may again be reminded.

जहां देखता हूं उधर तू ही तू है।

"Wherever I see, I see Thee and Thee alone."

God, as you know, is limitless. Do not limit Him with your limited intellect. Can you imagine anything beyond God? The Gita says :

"You must regard everybody as equal, whether he is a Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, an enemy, a dog, or a dog-eater. You must love all with an open heart, because God is everywhere. That person alone is learned who realizes such oneness with All, because of God's presence in all."

My dear ones! All the knowledge of this world is useless, if one does not visualise one's real Beloved, God, everywhere, in every atom of this universe. Another Persian poet says :

"My heart is so saturated with the idea of God that there is no room left for ego or anything else."

From this point of view, a Hindu can worship not only a cow but any thing, because God is in everything and everything is in Him.

Please see the Hindu philosophy through the eyes of the *Hindus*. Then and then alone can you understand it.

There is yet another aspect of the point of view. It is a worship, if you pay utmost respect to any one. From this angle of vision, a common Hindu has a very great consideration and regard for the cow, because she has proved herself to be extremely useful and serviceable in his domestic life.

You know that India is an agricultural country. More than 90% of our population earns its livelihood through farming. Cows gives birth to calves, who grow up as cows or bulls or oxen. These oxen or bulls are the only means of boosting up the agricultural economy in vast rural areas. These bulls and bullocks are also used for other purposes, such as for drawing water from the wells for irrigating fields. For this purpose big receptacles, called *Purs* are used which are also made of her leather. The cow leather is used for many other purposes such as making shoes and other useful articles of our daily life. Her horns are used for making combs. The powder of cow's heel is used as manure. Her urine is used by the *Vaidyas* and the *Hakims*, in preparing many a medicine to cure various diseases. Her bone charcoal is used for whitening sugar. Her bones are utilised for manufacturing *Sares*, an adhesive substance used for the joints in the wood furniture. Cow-dung is used as manure to increase the fertility of the soil. Cow-dung cakes are used as fuel by the villagers in India. Cow-dung is also antiseptic. As such,

it is used as a thin plaster to cover the *Kachcha* floors and the mud walls. Thus it is evident that every part of the cow is utilised for the good of the masses. The cow is more useful and serviceable than any other animal.

Besides, cows give us sweet milk to be used as a nourishing diet. Cow's milk resembles that of a mother. The babies can, therefore, digest it very easily. You might or might not know that *Rama*'s mother died when he was only a baby. *Rama* had, therefore, to be brought up only on cow's milk. He has a very good experience of the usefulness of cow's milk. It is not only nourishing but also keeps the mind cool and unexcited and promotes one-pointed concentration. Even today, *Rama* prefers cow's milk to any other diet. Since we drink her milk, we give her the respect due to a mother.

The cow is the most useful animal in the domestic life of the Indians. On account of the immense benefits which we draw from her, the *Hindus* have a great respect, regard and affection for her. They, therefore serve her wholeheartedly with love and affection. Even the non-vegetarian *Hindus* consider it a taboo to eat beef, because of their respect and regard for her. They consider it their bounden duty to preserve and protect her and not to eat her flesh. Truly, cow is the wealth of the Indian farmer. She is his property, belongings, estate and effects. In fact, his prosperity in life depends upon her.

Cow has a very great importance from the economic point of view in the rural life of Indiáns, including the Muslims. Even today the majority of the Muslim farmers in the rural India do not take beef. The farmers have, therefore, been preserving and protecting her, as their moral duty. You can say that the *Hindus* worship the cow in the sense that they have extreme respect and reverence for her, on account of her extra-ordinary utility in their domestic and economic life. But there is no special religious consideration or

significance involved in the extreme respect for the cow. It is the pragmatic, useful and economic considerations, which has carved out a coveted place for it in our life.

Query : *Hindus* call the cow their mother. How and why?

Rama laughs heartily at this question and says: The answer to this question has already been given. The *Hindus* regard the cow their mother whose milk they drink. Therefore, they pay her their filial respect to her as if she is their own mother. It is for this very reason that they call her *Go-Mata*, the 'cow-mother'.

Do you not pay utmost respect to the lady who feeds you with her breast milk, even though she may be your maid servant?

Here *Rama* is reminded of an incident of the Muslim King, Akbar, the Great.

One Koka was a great Noble in Akbar's *Darbar* (court). He rebelled against the King a number of times. But Akbar excused him repeatedly. When his well-wishers enquired, he said that both Koka and he himself were fed on the breast milk of a common Rajput lady. It was the river of this milk which had been preventing him from taking any strong action against Koka. Wonderful!

Although Akbar was a Muslim king, he regarded his Rajput Hindu nurse as his mother and paid her the respect and honour due to the mother. Similarly he did not take beef because he used to take cow's milk. *Rama* wonders why you should have any objection to the *Hindus* calling and paying respect to the cow as the mother.

It is quite evident that the respect paid to the cow is because she has a great importance in the Indian society and Indian economy. She is most-needed by the farmer. It is on account of her (cow) that he earns his livelihood. It is on the cow that his prosperity and affluence rests. You should appreciate the usefulness of the cow and pay her due respect and love. Thank God who created such an useful animal for the benefit

of the people in your country. The cow really deserves the respect of a mother.

Query : Respected Swami Ji, the *Hindus* believe that God comes from heavens to this earth, as an *Avtar*, to establish harmony, concord and peace. Is this not a fact?

Rama : The *Hindus* do not consider God to be confined to the heavens. He is Omnipresent. It is wrong to hold that God comes as *Avtar* only from the heavens.

The word *Avtar* means, "descended" : Only that man can be called an *Avtar*, on whom God's attributes, Divine Actions and His Nature have descended to the greatest possible extent, as compared to others. Such a person gradually evolves himself, and develops his physical, mental and spiritual powers like large-heartedness, broad-mindedness, spiritual knowledge, sympathy, spirit for selfless service, mental dispassion, renunciation, valour, tolerance, morality, universal love, blissfulness, truth, justice, leadership, farsightedness. The people accept such a person as an *Avtar* on account of the high standard of his conduct, character and achievements.

You might have observed that when it is unbearably hot, the rains come to give relief to all. So, too, according to the plan of nature, the *Avtars* are born on this earth in a particular area and at a time when they are needed most. This is the Law of Nature.

Query : Can you call our Hazrat Mohammad Saheb as an *Avtar*?

Rama : Yes. He is an *Avtar*. He was needed the most in Arabia, and, therefore, he was made to be born in that area. In that period the Arabians were steeped in primitive ideas and ignorance. The Arabs were divided and segregated due to disagreement and disunity among themselves. It was Hazrat Mohammad who, with his extraordinary will-force and faith in God, united the Arabs and converted them into a strong nation. It was a great miracle of Mohammad Saheb.

Query : Why do the *Hindus* take as an *Avtar*,

the fish, the turtle and even the pig. What philosophical significance does this have?

Rama : The history of this earth, which, in fact, is the history of evolution explains the mythology of the *Hindus* in this respect.

The Hindu scriptures hold that this earth is the daughter of the sun. It only means that this earth is a piece of the sun, which separated from it billions of years ago. Even the modern science has corroborated this finding of the Hindu scriptures. When this earth separated from the sun, it was just a ball of fire. Slowly and slowly as it cooled down, it shrank, with the result that at some places deep depressions were formed and, at others, high mountains appeared with towering peaks. After millions and millions of years, these deep pits or depressions were filled with rain water and with rivers from the mountains, forming the ocean. This goes to show that billions of years ago, this earth was mostly covered with water. The most mobile animal moving and swimming in this water was in the form of a fish. Therefore, at the time of the original creation, fish, being the most active living being, was accepted as the first *Avtar* on this earth. At that time fish was the biggest living manifestation of God on the earth.

When the water on the earth began to dry up gradually, another animal which was evolved was in the form of a turtle. This animal could live both in water and on dried land. Fish can live only in water. It would die in the outside air, while the turtle can live both in water and on dried land. It can swim in water and also walk on the earth, though slowly. For this reason, the turtle was found to be more evolved animal than the fish. And it was taken to be the second *Avtar*.

After this, when the earth further dried up, marshy and swampy lands appeared with bog, quag, mud etc. Dense forests began to grow. By this time another animal, the boar had evolved, which could not only swim in water and live on marshy ground, but could also run swiftly on this earth in forests. The turtle

could only creep on the earth, but this animal, called boar, could also run swiftly on the solid earth. In the process of evolution, the boar was then the highest evolved animal of its time. Therefore, the boar was also taken to be an *Avtar* of the period. In this way, the wheel of evolution continued to advance onwards. The philosophy or the theory of *Avtar* is based on the theory of evolution.

In this process, quite a number of *Avtar* have come to this earth from time to time, according to the particular call and necessity of that period. The main *Avtars* after the boar are Narsingh, Baman, Parsuram, *Rama*, *Krishna* and Buddha. All these great men, called Avtars, were separate but indispensable links in the chain of human evolution. They had special significance and purpose for which they had been sent by Nature to this world. In future, too, *Avtars* will continue to come to this earth, according to the need of the time. The theory of *Avtar* is based on the irrefutable inferences of the modern science. According to the Hindu philosophy, the *Avtar* appears only in the being or person in whom the attributes, the conduct and the nature of God have clearly descended to meet the requirements of that time. In other words, an *Avtar* is the greatest personality of that particular period and the area. The great Sant Kabir has beautiful described this *Avtar* theory in a few words :

घट घट मेरा साइयां, सूना घट नहिं कोय।
बलिहारी वा घट्ट की जा घट परघठ होय।।

"Though my God is present in every thing and there is nothing where He is not. Yet, I adore only that person in whom He has clearly manifested Himself."

Therefore, the more a person displays Godly attributes, the greater His manifestation through him. In other words, the more God-Realized a person is, the greater *Avtar* he would be called. The Muslims call such a man as *Auliya, Pir,* or a Prophet. But a Hindu, calls such a man an Avtar. This is in a nutshell the *Avtar* Theory.

Query **:** We are very thankful to you for clearing our doubts about Avtar. We would now request you to kindly enlighten us on the theory of Ava-gavan or rebirth. Are you also convinced of it?

Rama **:** The theory of Ava-gavan (transmigration of soul) is based on the philosophy of Karma or action. This is not a matter of mere belief but is proved by logic.

Rama has already told you that a man has not reached his present stage of evolution all at once. He is here today by his gradual development, through the process of what the scientists call the 'Law of Evolution.' This Law is based on convincing experiments and has been proved to the hilt by Darwin only in the 19th century. But the *Hindus* Seers had realized this natural Law thousands of years ago. Even in the oldest scriptures of the *Hindus*, we find this Law having been mentioned.

According to this 'Law of Evolution' the microscopic bacteria or amoeba gradually passes through various stages of the lower animals to develop finally into the form of a human being. The modern science has proved it very beautifully and logically with the help of convincing experiments. Upto the stage of the animals below the human beings, this evolution goes on automatically in a natural way. The lower animals possess only the instinct. But the human beings have rationalism in them. In other words, man develops in him, the power of discrimination. Since he has developed rationalism and the power of discrimination in him, he tries to act according to his own wisdom, as dictated by his own individual intellect. As such, he is held responsible for his own actions or deeds.

From this state onwards, the 'Law of Action' begins to work. As you sow, so shall you reap. This law is immutable and infallible. Even in our daily life we find it as proved. Nobody should hesitate to accept or deny this Natural Law. This Law is quite obvious and self-evident. We will be punished or rewarded,

according to our bad or good deeds. It is according to this very Law that a man can rise or fall. It is according to this very Law that a man makes or mars his destiny. If a man's actions are good, he would be rewarded. He will also get further chances to raise himself higher and higher. If, however, his deeds are bad, i.e. not in conformity with the Law of nature, he is sure to be punished, he cannot escape it. Despite this, Nature continues to present opportunities to him to do good deeds, so that he may reform himself and continue to evolve himself.

Man, as you know, is free to act in any way he likes. But, he is bound to face the consequences of his past deeds. So long as a man does not put his hand in the fire, he will remain unscathed. It is upto him to put his hand in the fire or not. So long as you have not signed the loan deed, you are not responsible to repay it (loan). To sign or not to sign such a deed depends upon you. But if you have signed such a deed, you are bound to make the payment. If you have taken the purgative, you are forced to run to the toilet again and again. You cannot avoid doing this.

All this means that you are free to do or not to do any work. But, once you have done it, you can never escape its consequences, good or bad. Nobody's recommendation can work here. You must reap the fruits of your actions, sooner or later. There are certain medicines which act immediately, while the effect of some others is experienced only after some time. The effect of certain other medicines is seen after days or weeks. Similarly, there are certain actions, the result of which is awarded immediately, while there are other which are rewarded later on. This is the Law.

God is not only just, but He is also kind and merciful. He repeatedly offers opportunities to the misguided or mis-led persons to reform themselves, so that they may continue to advance on the path to progress. They must not stop till the goal is reached. It is on these principles that the theory of rebirth is

based. They who do not admit the theory of 'rebirth', accuse God of being unjust, wrong and tyrant. They, thus, ignore one of the most important laws of Nature. You see, there is heterogenous differences among various persons in this world. Why should there be so much of dissimilarity and variance, as to cause divergent and incongruous characters? Have you ever given any thought to it? Some are narrow-minded, while others have a broad out-look. Some are greedy, while some others are benevolent. Some are angelic, while others are *Shaitan* personified. Some are afflicted with sorrow, while others are gifted with happiness and prosperity. Some are sickly, while others enjoy perfect health. After all, why should there be so much of disparity and inequality. If you reflect seriously, you cannot give any satisfactory explanation for this except that it is all due to one's past actions.

A man can live for seventy, eighty or hundred year in this world. According to the Muslim's faith, after his death, he will, so to say, remain imprisoned in his grave for millions and millions of years, till the day of judgement. He will, then, go to heaven or hell for good, to suffer the results of his past actions, as judged by God. He will not thus be allowed any opportunity to reform himself or to make any fresh or renewed efforts for his evolution. This is what the Christians or the Muslims are said to believe. For a period of seventy or even hundred years of his worldly life, the poor man will have to face the imprisonment of millions of years in the grave, before the judgement is pronounced by God. How can God perpetrate such acts of injustice, when He is said to be most reasonable, fair and just?

A baby is born in a rich family and he lives with comfort, pleasure and delight. Why so? Why is God so pleased with him from his very birth, as to allow him this life-long comfort and ease? There must be, after all, some cause for His preconception and kindness for him. There is another side to it. Here, a baby is born in a beggar's family with practically no chance to

progress. He is born a beggar and dies a beggar. He has to pass his whole life in pain, affliction, worries and woes. Why? What his fault? What sin had he committed for which he has been punished, since his very birth? Why is God so cruel to him? What has made Him so revengeful against him? What sort of justice is this?

A man is very wise, intelligent and also efficient. Even then, he is unable to get an employment any where. At times, he thinks of committing suicide for his failure to earn his livelihood, simply because he belongs to a poor family with no recommendation for himself. On the other hand, there is another man, who is welcomed every where, even though he is dull-headed and inefficient. Why? Why was he born with a silver spoon in his mouth? Why does he monopolise all pleasures and enjoyments? After all, there must be some reason behind it.

A child, since his birth has been suffering from boils, fever, dysentery and other painful diseases. Why? What sin had he committed to have to face the wrath of God in this way? Why has he been punished, at all? Some people argue that the ailments of the parents have been transmitted to the child. But Why? Why was this child made to take birth in a family, where the parents were sickly and unhealthy? There are other children as well, born of the same parents. Why did they not inherit the diseases of their parents? All these facts combine to prove that all this is not a mere coincidence. There is some cogent and valid reason at the root of it.

Let another example be quoted. A poor father has four sons. They are all poverty-stricken and with great difficulty manage to make two ends meet. All of a sudden, one of the sons gets a lottery of a million rupees. He separates himself from his parents and brothers. He leads a luxurious life with all possible comforts and dissipation. Can you please explain why God was so much pleased with him as to make him

a king out of a beggar? You might say, "It is God's will. The man has no right to question His will. He is free to do anything, He likes. Who are we to question Him"? You may or may not be right in your thinking, but, if you are satisfied with such a God, *Rama* has nothing to say. But, a rational and intelligent person will not accept such an arbitrary despotism of God. God is, then, more of a tyrant than kind or merciful. Is He really so unreasonable and arrogant as to make one a king and the other a beggar to be insulted and abused by his own fellow men?

Dear friends, God is neither a tyrant nor unjust. The entire show of this universe is going on, according to definite and set Laws of Nature. Everybody has, therefore, to reap the harvest of his past actions, consistent with His irrevocable Laws. Accordingly, one is sickly and the other is healthy, one has to sit on thorns with pain and worries, while the other is rolling in wealth with a care-free and luxurious life. You will agree with *Rama* that the entire universe is nothing but a show of cause and effect. Therefore, nothing occurs without some definite cause. You may or may not be aware of these causes, but they must exist there. And, if you reflect seriously, you can also discover them at the back of any incident. It is only this Law of 'cause and effect', which is at the root of 'rebirth after death.' Therefore, you have to recognise and accept this Law. This explanation is quite simple and logical. It is also in agreement with the various aspects of human life. It gives repeated opportunities to man to reform himself. And, as such, it is in the interest of the man himself. It gives him ample incentives to do good and benevolent deeds, so as to be born in a good family in future, which will further help him in the process of evolution to limitlessness.

Query : If there is a previous life of a man, he should remember the incidents and affairs of his past. But, as we see, he is unable to conjure up any remembrance of them. Why?

Rama : It is not so, always. There have been a few cases when a few children were able to recollect some of the incidents of their past lives. On verification of their authenticity and veracity, they were found to be correct. But it is neither possible nor necessary for every man to recollect all the events of his past life. You might have observed that the children often forget that they were given milk while asleep the previous night. Even in our own present life, we do not remember all the events of the past. We forget quite a number of the events of our this very life. It is, therefore, very difficult to remember the events of our past life. It is not unnatural.

As a matter of fact, it is in our own interest that we fail to recollect the events of our past life. Had we remembered them, we would have been pained to recollect the bad relations and the sad affairs of our past life. If we could recollect the enemies of our past life, we would have been brooding over their enmity and injustice. This would have made our present life very unhappy. We would also have tried to retaliate in our present life. All such emotional considerations would have certainly proved as impediments and stumbling blocks in the process of our evolution.

We have to advance forward and not backward to retrace our steps. One who wants to advance onwards but is in the habit of looking backwards is sure to stumble. Such a person will not be successful in making any appreciable progress. You will please mark that our peace of mind is disturbed and we feel dejected and grieved when we remember any unfortunate, ominous or adverse incident of our present life. That is why, it is very kind of the merciful God that He made us forget the incidents of our past life. Now, in our present life, we can begin our career afresh with renewed efforts, ways and means and resources, so as to reform ourselves. It will help us advance on the path of progress and evolution. Had we remembered the distressing conflicts, depressing strifes and irksome

struggles of our various past lives, we would have made our present life in an unattached way, like an unconcerned witness. We must surrender ourselves whole-heartedly to be lost in the discharge of our present duties, without caring for the result. Our work will, then, become easy, pleasant, and untiring. Such an attitude of ours will maintain our equanimity and help us preserve our peace of mind. **Do not please forget that peace is the most needed factor for success in every sphere of your life**. This is the most essential means for achieving the goal of the life. Without peace of mind you cannot successful stresses peace and equanimity in all possible ways in all the circumstances.

Muslim Representatives : Respected Swamiji we are very grateful to you for removing our grave doubts. But we still have some queries left. Since we have already taken a lot of your valuable time and since others are anxiously waiting outside to see and talk to you, we would beg leave of you at this moment. But we would request you to kindly permit us to see you again tomorrow at this very time to have the pleasure of your holy company and to know more about religion. We hope, you will kindly oblige us.

Rama : Yes, yes. *Rama* has no objection. It would be a great pleasure. You are always welcome for this purpose.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

—: Om :—

Part-II

Muslim Representative : We observe that it is a common practice with the people to declare the superiority of their respective religions. We are anxious to know what 'religion' stands for. A common man of ordinary intelligence is puzzled at their conflicting assertions. He is confused. We would, therefore, request you kindly throw scholastic light on this subject.

Rama **:** Well brothers, Truth is only one and that is to realize that this entire universe is the manifestation of God. In other words, it is nothing but God. There is no differentiation. It is nothing but the All-pervading and Omnipresent God. Everything is interpenetrated by Him.

But different persons, at different times, in different countries, have in their attempts to realize God attributed different meanings to the word 'religion.' According to the evolution of man and his civilization the form and the significance of religion have been changing from time to time. But the final effect of religion is the development of the highest stage, where peace, happiness, spiritual ecstasy, Truth, large-heartedness, benevolence, universal love, fellow-feeling, sympathy, will-force, divine knowledge etc., burst forth automatically. In short, we may thoroughly grasp Truth that we are not this body, mind or intellect, but its Master who runs the entire show of this universe. Religion helps us to know Truth and unravel the mysteries with multifarious names and forms. It is through religion that we can realize what we really are

and what our original source is. This is the aim of religion.

Muslim Representative : Swami Ji, Kindly further explain to us what you have elaborated about religion so that we may understand it easily and correctly.

Rama **:** *Rama* hopes that you all know that according to Koran, God is the original source of all of us. He alone is our primordial cause. But, it is sad that on account of the varied attractions of this ostentatious world, we forget God. We are badly misled by our keen craving for material gains. We are, as if, possessed by our possessions. These temptations do not let us realize God. To save ourselves from all these pit-falls, we need religion, so that we may not forget the aim of our life and may continue to progress day by day, in every way, on the path of evolution. It is through religion that we can come out of the darkness of ignorance and merge ourselves in God from whom we have emanated.

There are different habits, nature and ways of life of different persons. Therefore, the mode of religious practices are also different for different persons. Nevertheless, the final aim of all these different persons is the same, i.e. Realization of God. You can also say that religion is the righteous process of our allround evolution to limitlessness. In other words, religion helps us replace the feeling of our limited-self by that of the Universal Self, to achieve God-Realization. Through the infinite power of God, inexhaustible happiness and eternal peace are latent in man who is not conscious about it. Hence to know how to acquire this hidden treasure of God-hood, we need the help of religion which is a key to unlock this invaluable coffer.

Query **:** You say that man is God. Is it at all possible? Kindly elaborate it further.

Rama **:** Why man alone? All that we see, feel or imagine is nothing but God.

Your own Koran says that God is near to you than your own aorta. If you accept this version of Koran, you will also have to admit that it is true not in your individual case, but in the case of every thing and every body. Therefore, according to Koran, you have to see God in every thing. Because He is in everything. You already admit that God is limitless. He is all-pervading and universal. He is permeating in the minutest particles of every cell of your body, mind and intellect. According to Koran, He is *Hazir* and *Nazir*, i.e. He is Omnipresent and Omniscient. You have now no option but to feel His presence in all and sundry. He is not at all separate from you. As such, He is one with you. And, when He is one with you in entirety, where is the difference between you and God? You are what He is and He is what you are. Therefore, see God in all, including yourself and the minutest particle of the matter. See Him in friend and foe, in *Kafir* and *Momin* alike and love all like your own self, because the same God who is in you is also in others as well.

Query : But how is it possible for us to love enemies, *Kafirs* as our own-self?

Rama : We do not have to make an effort to love some one. Love is automatic. You start loving your wife whom, perhaps, you have never seen before. How do you love her, all of a sudden, after your marriage? Do you repeat her name on the beads? How do you start loving your new-born baby when you had never seen before his birth? Why so? Because you start feeling your oneness with your wife and baby. Please remember that no one can love anybody, unless he feels his oneness with him, her or it. This is an infallible Law of Nature. You cannot be separate from God who is already within and around you. Similarly, God is present not only in you, but in *Kafirs* as well. If you love Him, it naturally follows that you must also love all those in whom your own God is pervading. There are no separate Gods for a *Kafir* and a *Momin*. i.e. for

a non-Muslim and a Muslim. God, as you know, is One. On account of the Omnipresence of God you must regard every body like your own-self and love all, irrespective of his being a Hindu, a Muslim, a *Kafir* or a *Momin*.

Similarly you say that you want to love God. Very well. But, you will have first to feel your oneness with Him. This is the Law of Love. Therefore, you cannot love God, if you are not first conscious of your unity with Him. The more you realize your oneness with Him, the more you will love Him. But God is 'Limitless' and 'Infinite'. He is pervading in every atom of this universe. Since this universe is inhabited by all sorts of persons, good and bad, therefore, if you really love God, you will have to love all, irrespective of their being good or bad without taking into consideration their caste, creed, religion, nationality etc., because He can be separated from none. Therefore, if we are true *Momins*, i.e., if we are true devotee of God, it is incumbent upon us to love all, including the *Kafirs* and the *Momins*, without any differentiation. It is an insult to God Himself if you hate anybody, because the same God, who is residing in you, is also present in the person whom you hate, dislike or shun. Your motto in life should, therefore, be to love all like ownself.

If you start feeling, heart and soul, the presence of God in all, the curtain of your ego or selfishness, which obstructs your universal vision of God, will be removed. And, the, your feeling of love for all will burst forth automatically, even for those whom you call *Kafirs*. To love all is to love God.

Please reflect that, when God is permeating and pervading every particle of this earth, can you or your *Kafir* be said to be away or separate from Him? And, when you feel that you are really one with Him, surely you are nothing but God Himself. You will please realize that the same God, who is running the entire universe, is present in all-of us, in you, in the mineral, in the

vegetable and in the animal kingdoms. Can any differentiation persist? The fact is that you are one with all. You are Infinite.

Query : But how can this Infiniteness be understood and realized?

Rama : An Urdu poet has aptly said :

अक़्लो खिरद से हम को सरोकार कुछ नहीं।
इन दोनों साहिबों को हमारा सलाम है।।

"We have nothing to do with the intellect or understanding. We salute them to say good-bye to them."

Infinite God cannot be understood through finite intellect. But He can certainly be realized through *Gyan* or divine knowledge.

As regards the comparison between you and God, the question does not arise. The comparison is made between two objects. It can be done only in duality. But in *Vedanta*, it is all one and only one, without a second. How can you compare when there is none else to be compared with. It is non-dualism or *Wahdaniyat*, as you call it in your Islam.

A Poet says:

एक ही एक है यां ग़ैर का कुछ काम नहीं।
ज़ाते मुतलक़ में दुई का तो कहीं नाम नहीं।।

"There is one and only one, and none else, In the Absolute Self, there is no affix or duality."

My dear, You call God *Wahdhool-la-Sharik*, i.e., One without a partner. Then, who is to be compared and with whom?

As to the question that if we are God ourselves, we must inherit atleast some of His attributes or nature. A poet says:

जिसको कहते हैं ख़ुदा, हम ही तो हैं।
मालिके अर्ज़ोसमा, हम ही तो हैं।।
तालिबाने हक़ जिसे हैं ढूंढ़ते।
अर्श पर वह दिलरुबा, हम ही तो हैं।।

We are what is called God.
We are the master of the whole universe.
We are the Being, whom
The lovers of Truth are searching in Heaven.

In reality, we all are God. We must not entertain any doubt about it. Who says that we do not possess the Nature of God. Now please listen.

You already know that God does exist and that He is Eternal. He remains the same forever. In other words, He is absolute. In the Vedantic terminology, He is called *Satya* or Absolute Truth. *Satya* means immortal, that which remains the same for ever.

The second thing which you also admit is that there is nothing higher or better than God. He is wisdom or knowledge personified. Whatever He does, is right. In other words, He is the Absolute Knowledge. In the *Vedantic* terminology, it is called *Chitt* or consciousness.

The third thing is that God does not suffer from any want. He does not fall short of any requirement, deficiency or insufficiency. God has no rival. He has no partner. He is, in the words of your Koran, *'Wahdhool-la-Sharik'*. Such a Being ever remains happy, cheerful and jovial. He is above all the uneasy afflictions and distressing infelicities. In other words, God is the Absolute Bliss. In the *Vedanta*, they call it *Anand*.

The Hindu philosophers, therefore, call *Brahman*, *Sat-Chit-Anand* or *Satchidanand*. The Muslims also admit that God is *Hasti-e-Mutlaq*, *Ilme Mutlaq* and *Saroor-e-Mutlaq*. The Muslims should have no objection in accepting, what the *Hindus* say. The Muslims also accept the *Satchidanand* nature of God. But unfortunately you do not clearly understand the version of your own religion. These are not the qualities or the attributes of God. The qualities or the habits can be changed and they do change. But the Nature of God, which Muslims call the *Fitrat* of God, is, so to say, the very form of God, which never changes. You can take

the example of fire. Wherever there is fire, there must be some heat, light and energy. The fire must have all these three constituents or features. These form the very nature of fire, which never changes. You may call it the very form of fire. Similarly, *Satchidanand* is the very Nature of God, which is immutable and unchangeable. His nature if to be experienced and felt as it expresses itself in some form or the other everywhere. Now, please experiment this maxim with the universe. Let us first apply it to man.

We see every day, all around us, in our villages, towns, cities and localities that the people die. Inspite of seeing them dying with our own eyes, we do not attach any importance to death. We consider death as a daily routine of Nature and ignore it, as if it is a common place thing. We take a very cursory view of it, thinking that the body, which comes to this world, must leave it one day. We do not care to give even a moment's thought to death, as if we have nothing to worry about it. We continue to perform our daily jobs in a complacent way, as if we are not to die. We are apt to forget even the death of our nearest and dearest relatives. Even on the cremation ground or at the funeral pyre, they are seen talking in a jovial mood, as if death is nothing to them. Even the persons suffering from very serious and fatal diseases have a desire to live for ever. Why so? Have you ever thought, why the whole world takes no serious notice to death and trifles it with disregard?

You might have also observed that everybody considers himself to be wisdom personified. He tries to cover up even his most foolish mistakes with strange arguments, howsoever, unconvincing they may be. If you call the biggest fool a fool, he will consider it to be his greatest insult, so much so that he would regard you as his bitterest enemy and would be prepared to fight it out with you. Even the most sinful, immoral and depraved criminal would try to hide his most

barbarous sins and prove himself to be innocent. Even a murderer tries to justify his guilt. All this is every day affair and a common place thing. Have you ever thought why ever man considers himself to be wisdom personified and free from guilt?

Let us take another case. As you already know, it is the heartfelt and earnest desire of every individual to be ever happy and peaceful. He desires that he should always remain free of any woe or worry. He performs the worldly chores with the sole intention to please himself and to maintain his peace. He wants that the period of his happiness may continue for ever. Not only men, all the living beings want to pass a happy and peaceful life. Why so? Why is this singular and identical desire or propensity so universal?

Nobody wants to die. Nobody wants to be called a fool. Everybody considers himself to be the wisest person. Everybody wants to be independent and free, and pass his entire life in peace and happiness. These features, common to all the living beings, indicate that we are all united as One. Nobody is outside this and nobody can escape the firm hold of such fervent desires. Please think over this universal desire.

Whatever is made of gold is nothing but gold. Whatever is made of iron is iron, and whatever is made of clay is clay. Since we all have emanated from God who is our original source, primordial cause and basic substratum, it is but natural for us to inherit His Nature. Just as the seed of a plant contains all its nature, condensed in a latent form, so too, the nature of God is locked-up or concealed in us. Since we are the sons of Nectar, God, the Immortal, it is quite natural that we must also be immortal. *Rama* has already told you the Nature of God. It is Absolute Truth, Absolute Consciousness and Absolute Bliss. Since we have all emerged from God and since He alone is our original Source, we have, in effect, acquired His nature, as inheritance. As such, why should we be afraid of Death?

Death comes to the body. And we are not this body. We are *Atman*, the Universal Soul, which is Immortal and eternal. Why should we be, then, afraid of mortality or death? Why should we, then, care for or take any notice of death? Primarily, we are the Absolute Truth and, as already said, Truth is Eternal, perpetual and indestructible. As such, Truth can never be crushed. Death will meet its own death, if it ever tries to extend its tentacles towards us, because we are immortal *Atman*.

When our real Self is the Absolute consciousness, the very source of wisdom, why should we consider ourselves to be a fool or an idiot?

When primarily our original source is the Absolute Bliss, why should we not try to enjoy delightful happiness, ecstatic bliss and serene peace? But, it is sad that we look for joy and happiness in the worldly objects. Unfortunately the forms of these worldly objects are, in themselves, transitory and destructible. How can we derive permanent happiness and eternal peace from them? Therefore, we are always deceived, duped and deluded. O, my dear, the permanent happiness can be had only from the permanent source of happiness. Worldly objects, being themselves transitory, fleeting and ephemeral, cannot give us permanent peace or pleasure.

When God's basic Nature is discovered and experienced in all of us, surely we are what He is. Unfortunately, due to our unacquaintance and deep-rooted ignorance, we have forgotten our real Self and have been overpowered by the pomp and show of the elusive pleasures of this world. O dear ones, you can clearly see that we do possess the Nature of God, as inheritance because we emanate from God. If, therefore, you really want to save yourself from the worldly troubles and afflictions and challenge the fearful and painful agony of death, please know yourself, and feel your Oneness with Him. Here lies your salvation and

it is only here that you can enjoy a peaceful serenity and eternal Bliss.

***Query* :** As is depicted in the pictures, the Hindu God continues to sleep in the ocean of milk on the huge body of a thousand hooded serpent. We wonder how He would be breathing in the ocean. He is so ease-loving that a beautiful lady, laden with costly jewellery, presses and massages His legs. Is this a fact? Is it true of the Hindu God. May we now its reality?

***Rama* :** It is an allegorical style to bring home a particular truth which can easily be understood by common man of ordinary intellect.

You know that at times people describe a brave person as a lion. It does not means that the particular person has got claws with pointed nails to clutch his prey and that he has got pointed teeth to help him eat raw flesh. It only means that the particular person is very brave and independent like a lion and is not afraid of anyone. This is called the language of allegory. You might have also heard that people say that a particular person is a mere cow. It does not means that the man has horns over his head and that he would be eating only dry husk. This is to only express, in the allegorical language, that the man, in question, is very simple, quiet and innocent.

The Islam also says that God is limitless. And you know that the intellect is limited. How can, then, the limitless God be comprehended in his entirety by a limited brain, by a limited intellect? Therefore, it is impossible to define Him in words which have their own limitations. How can Infinite be bound down by a finite? *Hindus* have expressed their inability to define God. They say, *'neti, neti, neti'* i.e. He neither this, nor that. However, you will appreciate the master-mind of the ancient Hindu adepts who have, through pictures, given atleast an indication, glimpse of God. This can help an ordinary man to imagine what God could be beyond imagination. They have explained this through an allegory.

The picture depicts God lying in a comfortable posture on the body of *Shesh-Nag*, the special serpent with a thousand hoods in an ocean of milk. *Lakshmi*, the goddess of wealth, is massaging His legs. A petiole is coming out of His navel, at the top of which is a beautiful lotus flower, with four petals. *Brahma* is sitting on this flower and is reciting the *Vedas* from His four mouths. The complexion of God has been shown to be sky blue. This allegory does not mean that the Hindu God continues to take rest in the ocean of milk and that a very beautiful damsel is there to humour or please Him. The picture is only an allegory. First try to understand this allegory and, then, you will be able to proceed further.

As all of us know, God is beyond human comprehension. How can a limited intellect reach the unlimited God? But we cannot ignore it altogether. We have to take its help upto a certain limit. The *Hindus* as well as the Muslims accept God to be omnipresent. Muslims call him *'Hazir* and *Nazir'* i.e. He is Omnipresent and also Omniscient. *Hindus* call Him *Vishwavyapi* i.e. Universal. In order to indicate God's Universality, the *Hindus* have named Him as *Vishnu* which literally means Omnipresent or *Vishwavyapi* i.e., Universal.

Why have the *Hindus* shown the complexion of Lord Vishnu in the picture, as sky-blue? There must be some reason for this as well. You know, the sky is said to be unlimited. It is beyond the stars and the milky way. It is so extensively capacious that he intellect of man can not even imagine it. Therefore, they have not represented Him as black or white, but in order to indicate His limitlessness, they have shown His complexion as light-blue which is the colour of the sky, so that all may know that God is Infinite.

You also know that the sky is not only limitless but also indivisible. Therefore, the sky-blue colour also indicates that the Hindu God, *Vishnu*, is not only Infinite but also Indivisible. Therefore, the sky-blue

colour also indicates that the Hindu God, Vishnu, is not only Infinite but also *Akhand*, i.e., indivisible.

Now, *Rama* is going to explain to you the meaning of *Shesh-nag*, the serpent on the body of which *Vishnu*, the Omnipresent, Infinite and Indivisible God, has been shown to be sleeping. *Shesh-nag* is a compound word, consisting of two words, *shesh* and *nag*. *Shesh* means that which remains and *Nag* means 'serpent'. Therefore, *Shesh-Nag* means the serpent, which 'remains'. It has to be further elucidated. You might be aware of a general belief among the Indians that a female snake lays about one thousand eggs at a time. It somehow all these were to be converted into living snakes, the entire earth would soon be covered with snakes. This would create a rather dangerous situation for the inhabitants of this world. Therefore, according to the dispensation of Nature, the female snake becomes so hungry, after laying eggs, that she starts eating them herself. If any egg is somehow saved from having been eated, it develops into a snake. As such, it is called a *Shesh-nag*, i.e., the 'remaining snake.'

Now please mark. According to the Hindu conception or Hindu religion, there will come a day of total destruction or dissolution of this universe. The Muslims call it *Qayamat*, or the doom's day. At that time the entire creation is destroyed and merged into its Creator. After the disappearance of everything, only God remains, because He is Immortal. The Sufi Muslim poet, Ghalib, has also corroborated the same idea. He says:

न था कुछ तो ख़ुदा था, कुछ न होता तो ख़ुदा होता।
डुबोया मुझको होने ने, न मैं होता तो क्या होता।
When there was nothing, God was there,
When there would be nothing,
God shall continue to be there,
My pride of existence (Ego) drowned me.

When everything is dissolved,
Nothing will remain except God.

To sum up, even after the total destruction of the creation, the only existence that remains is that of God, like the *Shesh-nag* or the 'remaining-serpent'. Therefore, the *Hindus* in their allegory have shown their God *Vishnu* (Omnipresent) lying on the body of *Shesh-Nag* or the 'remaining-serpent' to indicate that only God remains and continues to exist even after the *Mahapralaya* or the day of *Qayamat*.

According to the *Hindus*, God has three main jobs to perform: to create, to preserve and to destroy. Even though all the three jobs are due only to one God, yet the *Hindus*, for the sake of convenience, have assigned these three jobs to three separate entities. Creation has been allotted to *Brahma*, preservation to *Vishnu* and destruction to *Mahesh*. For the sake of convenience only, *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* are taken to be separate, but, as a matter of fact, they form only one ubiquity. On account of their separate functions, these have been named differently. This aspect has been clearly explained in the very beginning of the Hindu scripture, *Bhagwat Puran*, Actually, there is no differentiation. It is all One, the only One.

There is only one man. He is called father by his children. He is also Advocate and, therefore, his client call him *Vakil Sahib*. His nephews call him uncle. His sisters call him brother. The same man has a side business of photography. His customers, therefore, call him the photographer. The man is the same but due to his different jobs, he is named differently. So is the case with *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*. They are all One, though named differently.

Now, you will please notice that all the three functions have been shown separately in the picture. When He creates, He is called *Brahma*. He has, then, been shown to be sitting on a lotus flower with four petals, having a petiole of twelve finger-length. Why this

length of twelve fingers only? You might be knowing that the organ of procreation of a person, man or woman, is at a distance of nearly twelve fingers from his or her navel. These organs are important and vital in the procreation.

It is because of this that the length of the petiole has been shown as twelve fingers only. Every new born child is as soft, tender, beautiful and attractive, as a lotus flower at the top of he petiole. This lotus flower has four petals. As you might be aware, there are four *Vedas*, the original Hindu books, containing all the four branches of Knowledge, *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Gyan* and *Vigyan*. The *Veda* simply means knowledge. A baby is expected to acquire and learn all the four branches of the *Vedic* knowledge, during his life-time in this world. Therefore, these four petals represent the four *Vedas*. God is said to be the source of the *Vedic* Knowledge. Therefore, *Brahma* not only creates this world but is also the source of inspiration and revelation of Knowledge. The baby's elementary knowledge ultimately develops into the *Brahma Vidya* or the Divine Knowledge. Therefore, *Brahma* has been shown in the picture as reading the *Vedas* or propagating the *Gyan*, including the *Vigyan* or the *Vishesh Gyan*, called the *Brahma Gyan*. All this a is *Brahma's* work. As has already been said, *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* are the three different names of the same one God.

Lord *Vishnu's* task is to preserve. The entire universe, as we see, is being preserved by Lord *Vishnu*, through his all-pervasiveness. According to the Hindu conception, navel is said to be the center of the digestive system. It has a very important role to perform for the preservation of life-force. If a man's digestive system is good, all the work connected with his body would be normal, including his power for procreation. Hence the petiole of the lotus flower has been shown to be coming out of the navel of Lord *Vishnu*. In the Yogic terminology, navel has been termed as *Vishnu Chakra*.

The preservation of a man also depends upon his nourishing diet. As you know, milk is said to be a complete natural diet. Milk contains hydrocarbon, carbohydrate, nitrogenous elements, minerals and water along with other vital elements, necessary for our nourishment. It is, therefore, provided in mother's breast, for bringing up a new born baby. The offsprings of all the mammals are brought up on milk. Without the nourishing diet, no life can be preserved. Therefore, milk is the symbol of nourishing diet. It is because of this, that Lord *Vishnu*, the Preserver, has been shown in the ocean of milk. Milk, as you know, is also the symbol of prosperity and affluence.

Death, destruction or doom is also essential for Nature, by trimming and pruning, to maintain peace and harmony. This is the work of the same Omnipresent God, now called *Mahesh*. Therefore, some inkling of death and destruction has been given in the picture of *Vishnu*. Snake is the symbol of death. You know that the snake has been represented as death in the ancient paintings and sculptures in Egypt. Therefore, snake has been shown to represent death. It has one thousand hoods, which shows that death may come not in one but in thousands of ways.

Thus, you see that all the three main functions of Nature—creation, preservation and destruction are depicted in the picture of *Vishnu*. Thus, this picture depicts the allegory with a purpose for the information and understanding of a common man.

Query : Why has God been shown here as resting in a reclining position, as if He is sleeping?

Rama : Who can sleep comfortably in this posture? Only that person who has no worry and tension. God has no discomfort. He is desireless. He has no inquietude, discomposure, annoyance or displeasure. He has no enemy or rival, no parallel or match. He is, so to say, intoxicated and inebriated in His own Universal Unity and all-embracing Oneness. A Persian poet says :

"Tanhastam, Tanhastam, Tanhastam"

It means "I am all alone. I am all alone. I am all alone".

When God is all alone, whom should He care for? What should He worry about?

मैं अकेला हूं, कहीं कुछ भी नहीं मेरे सिवा।
ज़ाते मुतलक़ में मेरे ग़ैर का कुछ काम नहीं।।

'I am all alone. There is nothing else beyond Me. In My Absolute Self, there cannot exist anything else.'

The Koran also says that God is all alone and that He has no partner. The *Kalma* says the same thing. *'La-Ilah-Illillah.'* Its meaning is that there is nothing but God or *Allah*. Why should He not, then, sleep comfortably in a care-free way?

You know, the sun itself does not do anything. Yet all life on this earth is due only to the presence of the sun which has been described by the scientists as the ultimate source of energy. So, too, though God Himself does not do anything, yet the entire show in this universe is due to Him, the *Vishnu*. To depict this, He has been shown as taking rest in a relaxed mood. He is Almighty with no vexation or tension of any sort. He is, therefore, all quiet, serene, tranquil and Peace-personified. He alone can relax or sleep in this way.

Please mark that in the picture of Lord *Vishnu* there is a halo of effulgence round his face. This indicates that God is light personified. You call this very thing in the Muslim terminology, as *'Pur-Jalal'*. The sweet smile on the lips of Lord *Vishnu* is to indicate His being care-free, self-confident, peaceful and blissful. Since man has emerged from God and since his final aim is to realize his merger in Him, he is ever anxious and desirous to achieve this everlasting Peace or permanent Bliss. Therefore, to encourage man expendite to have this achievement at the earliest, God or Lord *Vishnu* has been shown in the picture with a peaceful smile and in a blissful posture.

Query : When your God is all alone, why is a beautiful lady shown with Him. Is it necessary for the Hindu God to keep a beautiful girl to please Him?

Rama : No. No. The Universal God *Vishnu* does not need any one to please Him. He does not suffer from any want. He does not need anybody to help Him. All this is an allegorical representation. As has been mentioned in the Koran, God is *'Haq'* or Truth. According to the *Hindus* as well, God is Truth and Truth is God. Therefore, the *Hindus* observe the worship of *Satya Narayana*. The special feature of this *pooja* or celebration is that the person who celebrates this *Pooja*, takes a vow to observe Truth in all walks of his life and in all circumstances, so as to be happy and prosperous. Now, what does this beautiful lady represent, who is laden with precious jewellery and shown in picture as massaging the feet of Lord *Vishnu*, the Universality personified: Who is she? The *Hindus* have named her *Lakshmi*, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. She is invariably with Truth God, Lord *Vishnu*. You know, anybody who worships Truth God, leads a Truthful life, can never suffer from any want. In other words he is ever happy and prosperous. The person, who observes Truth in his life, earns the favour and good-will of goddess *Lakshmi*, who is always present with Truth-God, as His allegorical spouse or consort. All the necessities of such a man are automatically fulfilled by God Himself. It means that the person who sticks to Truth is served by Prosperity or goddess *Lakshmi*. In short, prosperity (*Lakshmi*) invariably remains attached with or tied to Virtue (Truth). Godliness, truthfulness, and virtue go hand in hand with prosperity. Therefore, *Lakshmi*, the goddess of wealth and prosperity has been shown, in an allegorical way, as serving God, Truth or Virtue.

One thing more. You might have noticed the way the elder person bless the young ones. They often say 'May you take your bath in milk.' This means that milk

is the symbol of prosperity. Only the well-off and the prosperous can afford to take bath in milk. The elders, therefore, wish their youngers prosperity and affluence, while blessing them in this way. Now, please mark that the Omnipresent Lord *Vishnu* is relaxing in the ocean of milk. The ocean of milk indicates Lord *Vishnu* is Prosperity personified. He is all in all He does not suffer from any want. It also means that all those who realize their oneness with God, the Omnipresent *Vishnu*, are always happy and gay. They enjoy prosperity in full, as if they are swimming in the ocean of milk of affluence and have become happy, contented, and prosperous.

Besides, milk is also a non-stimulating or a *satvik* diet. It, therefore, means that God is limitless ocean of *Satoguna* i.e. peace and harmony.

Now please see that the picture gives a lot of clear and important information about the conception of God. In a nut-shell, the picture indicates that God is one, without a second. He is limitless, unbounded and Omnipresent. He is the ocean of Peace, Amity and Harmony. The entire show of the Universe is due to Him, i.e., He is the Creator in the form of *Brahma*, Preserver in the form *Vishnu* and the Destroyer in the form of *Mahesh*, even though He is One and the only One. He is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. *Lakshmi*, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, is serving Him. It shows that all those, who lead a virtuous life of Truthfulness, are blessed with prosperity and affluence. Even, after the doomsday, when God's manifested diversity is again merged in Him, He remains, as He ever is, all alone, inebriated in His own non-dualistic glory with endless Peace and permanent Bliss, because there is none else besides Him to be His rival.

When we see a photo or a picture of some distinguished and renowned personality of great eminence, his special characteristics immediately become vivid before our eyes. Similarly, on seeing even the

small picture of Lord *Vishnu*, we get a clear peep into the vision of the mysterious, inconceivable and indescribable God.

Rama hopes that the meaning behind the picture of Lord *Vishnu* is brought home to you. Picture is simply a means to unravel Truth. Picture is not the end, but means to realize Truth, God-hood and become one with God. That is the purpose which a picture of the idol serves. Nothing beyond it.

Query **:** The question is rather delicate. Why do the *Hindus* worship the private parts of men and women in the name of Shiva? Is it the blind faith or mere ignorance of the *Hindus*? What is the mystery behind it?

Rama **:** It is not ignorance. It has a definite significance. It is an allegory. It indicates the aim of life. Not only the Muslims but millions of *Hindus* also do not understand the idea conveyed through this allegory. The followers of other religions also find fault with the *Hindus* for the so-called worship of the private parts in the name of Shiva. They do not understand the gesture implied in this symbol.

The fact is that every man in this world is after happiness or *Anand*. He tries to derive happiness in his wife and children. He sometimes thinks that he would get delight in the wealth and riches. At times, he stakes even his life to earn reputation, distribution, greatness, popularity or grandeur in order to obtain happiness. For this, he grasps one thing but when disappointed leaves it. He then clutches at some thing else and gives it up when it does not give him happiness. He is dejected everywhere. He allows himself to be ensnared in women, wine and wealth, but there, to, he is sadly disappointed. He does not get peace or happiness anywhere. He wants only happiness and nothing else. This must not be temporary, ephemeral or transient. But the poor fellow does not know that the true and permanent happiness is not to be found

in the worldly objects. My dear, oil can come out of the oil seeds only. Therefore, if a man wants to enjoy everlasting peace or permanent bliss he can get it only in God, who is peace and bliss personified. He is the source of eternal happiness and perpetual peace. And, as such, He alone is the true and final goal of human life.

But to an ordinary individual, complete satisfaction in the sex-act represents extreme happiness in this material world. A man can sacrifice anything to enjoy sex-satisfaction. This sex-satisfaction is the highest happiness for a man from the worldly point of view. Had it not been so, the process of procreation in this world would have come to an end. That is why, the private parts of man and woman have been shown in the *'Shivalingam'*, in the very process of intercourse. Its significance is to remind man of the aim of his life, which is the permanent happiness. As you all know, this happiness of orgasm is only temporary and lasts for a short while only. But the final goal of human life is not ephemeral or short-lived happiness. It is the permanent Bliss. Therefore, whosoever will fall a victim to the lure of the viciousness of this temporary enjoyment of the sexual pleasure, will surely meet his death-physical, mental and spiritual. As has been said, snake represents death. Therefore, a snake is invariably shown with this sexual symbol, called the *'Shivalingam.'* It is a warning to the man that, if he gives undue importance to this temporary enjoyment, he must meet his premature death. The man should, therefore, control his sexual desires and erotic pursuits.

You might have experienced that they drink cold water to pacify their sexual excitement and that by pouring cold water over the flushed or erect organ, the excitement is thus cooled down. Therefore, you might have observed that just over the *Shivalingam*, there hangs an earthen pot with a small hole at its bottom, through which water trickles in drops directly over the

Lingam. The purpose of this is to direct you to keep your sexual desire under control, or you shall have to face death invariably.

You know that when the *Hindus* go to any temple, they take with them some sweets etc. to offer it to the deity as *Prasad* or *Taburruk*. But, while going to the Shiva temple they do not take any sweets with them as offering. Instead, they take with them a jug full of water of preferably the Ganga water to be poured over the *Shivalingam.* This is to allay and tranquilize sexual passions. The *Shivalingam* only reminds of the final aim of the life, which is to attain the stage of Shiva or permanent bliss or happiness. In Sanskrit, Shiva means *'Kalyana'* – the perpetual good or permanent Bliss. Herein lies our good for good.

Query : Does not this method of specification indicate indecency and vulgarity? What do you think about it?

Rama : It all depends upon mental attitude of the person to take anything as indecent or otherwise. The scientists take out useful and serviceable ingredients and medicines from the articles which we detest and hate. This depiction of the so-called indecency is for the benefit of human evolution. Through the indication of temporary happiness in sex enjoyment, man is reminded of the permanent Bliss, the true goal of his life. God is goodness incarnate. In His manifestation or in His creation, the question of any vulgarity or indecency does not arise at all. The organs of the reproduction have been made, according to the faultless planning of God, for the propagation of the species. These organs are found not only in the animal but also in the vegetable kingdom. Without these reproductive organs, the procreation will stop on this globe. There is nothing indecent or vulgar in them. It is all natural and universal.

You know that in order to point out any star to a child, they take the help of some material aid and

then they tell the child "Lo! There is the star which you wanted to see." The material aid is only a means to make one understand a phenomenon. Similarly, the case of a worldly love is often taken to elucidate the Love for God. An Urdu poet says:

ख़ुदा याद आ गया मुझको बुतों की बेनियाज़ी में।
मिला बामे हक़ीक़त ज़ीनए इश्क़े मजाज़ी में॥

'I am reminded of God on seeing the faithlessness of the beloved.

I have, therefore, developed the real Love for God through the disappointment in the worldly love.'

In the *Shivalingam,* the temporary pleasure has been utilized to remind you of the real and permanent Bliss. God has universally provided these organs of reproduction for the continuance of the progeny on this earth. The idea of indecency has been injected into it by man, according to his own propensity. As, all organs of the body have equal importance, but their right or wrong use makes them good or bad.

Query : But how we define the right or the wrong use of a thing?

Rama : All those acts and actions which help your evolution are right and virtuous. And all other acts and actions which cause the downfall of a man or retard his onward progress are to be shunned and avoided. They are immoral and are called sins. It other words, to rise, to advance or to progress is a virtue and to collapse or to retrogade is undesirable and a sin.

The right use of any action is called a virtue and the wrong use of the same action is called a sin. For example, if a man kills another man to usurp his property or to feed fat his ancient grudge, it is a sin, because of his selfish motive. But, when the same man kills, with a machine gun, hundreds of the men of an invading army to defend his country, it is a virtue, because or the unselfish and higher motives.

Let another example be quoted from your own

history. You will please recollect that once Hazrat Ali came to grips with one of his opponents in a religious war. Ali made him fall flat on the ground and was about to thrust his dagger into his heart, but he (the opponent) spat on his (Ali's) face. Hazrat Ali left him untouched and stood aside. The vanquished was very much surprised at it. And, when he enquired of Ali the cause of sparing his life in that way, Ali's reply was in consonance with the true spirit of the essential teachings of the Islam. Ali said that he was going to kill him (the opponent) with no selfish motive of his own. But when he spat, on his face, his (Ali's) personal grudge was immediately aroused. Had he (Ali) killed him (the opponent) in such an agitated state, he would have committed a sin, according to the tenets of the Islam. On hearing this, the opposition of Ali's adversary to the Islam was shattered and he readily accepted it as his own religion. So, you will please see that, if the motive is unselfish, it is its right use. And, if the motive is selfish, it is its wrong use. The more the selfishness, the graver the sin. And, the more the selflessness, the greater the virtue. Therefore, the right or the wrong use of an action depends respectively upon its being unselfish or selfish.

Here, it seems necessary to tell you that, in order to understand any body's philosophy, custom, convention etc., in its proper perspective, you will have to view it from his own angle of vision, otherwise, if you look at it through your prejudiced point of view, you will fail to grasp its true spirit. The Christians have great respect and regard for the Cross. But, from the point of the non-Christians, it is only a structure of wood. The Muslims pay great respect to the few stones, called *Aswad*, placed in Kaba. But the non-Muslims take them as ordinary pieces of stone to worship which is to worship the matter. It has often been seen that the Muslims offer flowers or the sheet of flowers on the graves of the holy persons. Muslims also burn incense

or spread perfume etc., on the graves. But in the eyes of the non-Muslims, it is nothing but the worship of the graves Or, the Muslims make paper tombs or *Tazias* of their late Imam Hussain, and express their grief by beating their breasts in front of it. The non-Muslims may take it, as a paper worship or the *Tazia* worship and discard it, but the Muslims fully justify it from their own point of view. Similar is the case with the *Shivalingam*. The *Hindus* wish to express extreme pleasure, but it, being something abstract, cannot be put in a concrete form. The only way to express this highest pleasure in the world can be in the form of sexual intercourse or *Shivalingam*. Even though it indicates only temporary pleasure, yet, through its medium, the *Hindus* are reminded of the permanent Bliss, the final goal of human life. But the non-*Hindus* may take it amiss. It is very necessary to draw the right conclusion, concerning any problem, relating to some one else, from his own point of view, otherwise you can never judge it properly.

The sole purpose of the symbol, *Shivalingam*, is to dissuade a man from indulging in the temporary sex-pleasures and to remind him of his final goal, the achievement of the permanent Bliss. This Real Bliss is the *Brahman* Himself, who is the *Deva* of the *Deva*, *Mahadeva*, or *Ishwar* of the *Ishwars*, *Maheshwara*, God All in all. He is Shiva and He alone can help you enjoy lasting Peace and permanent Bliss. He alone is the Real Goal for all of us. This is the stage of God-Realization. The Sufi Muslims call it *'Ainul Yaqin'* or the stage of *Fana-Fillah*, the merging in God.

Query : Kindly tell us the means to achieve this permanent Bliss.

Rama : Beloved! It is a question of not just understanding, but also of practicing it in life. The greater your sincerity and earnestness in its practice, the greater the success you will be able to attain. God alone is the store of the Eternal Bliss. If you succeed

to instill God in you, everything will be easy for you to attain.

How to do this? It is not difficult to understand. God is already permeating every cell of your body. You are fully aware that, there are different methods which are adopted to explain a problem to different people in different stages of evolution. Even though the Koran has clearly said that God is Omnipresent, yet a common Muslim takes Him to be enthroned somewhere high-up in the Heavens, But, as a matter of fact, He is present in every heart. A poet says :

दिल के आइने में है तस्वीरे यार।
जब जरा गर्दन झुकाई देख ली॥

"God's picture is in every heart,
You can see Him whenever you like, by peeping into it."

Inspite of it, you do not see Him. Why? Because your heart has become dirty and opaque, due to your selfish and narrow outlook or ego. It is on account of your limited ego that millions of the worldly desires are thriving in your heart. You have only to merge this limited ego into the Universal Soul of God. Let the Urdu verse be quoted again.

फना बग़ैर बक़ा का पता नहीं चलता।
खुदी बग़ैर मिटाये खुदा नहीं मिलता॥

"Immortality cannot be achieved without (self) destruction, As such, unless you destroy your ego, you cannot achieve Godhood."

Your own ego is the stumbling block in your progress. Therefore, change this selfish ego into Godliness. You have nothing more to do. When God is permeating every atom of this universe, including your body, mind and intellect, where is the space left for your separate ego to exist? You have, therefore, to merge your false pride, arrogance, pomposity, selfishness, separatism etc. in your realization of oneness with God. This is the real *Holy Communion* of the *Christians*, the

Fanafillah of the *Sufi* Muslims, *Nirvan* of the *Buddhists* and the *Mukti* of the *Hindus*.

If, inspite of His Omnipresence, you do not see Him, it makes no difference in the beginning, because He atleast sees you. If you care to remember only this fact, you will be saved from thousands of crimes and sins. He knows and is quite aware of your requirements and necessities. If you are devoted to Him full faith and conviction, He is sure to grant all your requirements. It is sad that you continue to remain oblivious of Him and forget that the Omnipresent God is watching you all the time. If you really want to remain in touch with Him, please develop in you the sincere desire and the restless anxiety to do so. The truth is that you do not care to pay Him even half of the attention which you do to your wife and children.

If you want to earn His favour, remember the various occasions of His kindness to you and yearn with sincerity in your restless anxiety to meet Him. If you want to go to Kaba or Haj by the dry land-route, you will get into trouble. It would be much easier for you to travel by the sea route of your devotion for Him.

Surrender yourself to God. Be entirely His own. In the beginning you can say, 'I am His', because you do not see Him face to face. But when your loving devotion for Him is increased, you would start feeling His presence, as if He is face to face with you. You will, then, invariably address Him, 'I am yours.' Even at this stage you may consider yourself to be separate from Him, though you may feel His presence. But, slowly, when your spirituality is further evolved and you are fully convinced in your heart of hearts that God is all-pervading and interpenetrating and that He is permeating every cell of your body, mind and intellect, you will, then, realize that you are one with Him.

An Indian poet says :

मैं तू हुआ, तू मैं हुआ, मैं तन हुआ तू जां हुआ।
जिससे न फिर कोई कहे, मैं और हूं तू और है।।

"I am He and He is myself,
I am body and He is the Soul,
We are One and nobody can now say
That He is in anyway separate from me."

At this stage of the spiritual evolution you are what God is and God is what you are. Your separate identity has now completely merged in Him, as is water mixed with water. There is no difference now. There is no more 'mine and thine'. All the feelings of duality have been destroyed in the fire of *Gyan* or Knowledge. Since we are all one with God, we are nothing but God Himself. As such, we are Bliss personified. No worry, no anxiety and no vexation. It is all peace, tranquility and blissfulness.

Query **:** Swami ji, you have been repeating this again and again that since, according to the *Vedanta*, we are all one, we should consider all and love all like our ownself. Can we implement this doctrine in our daily life?

Rama **:** Why not? If a man clearly understands that God is All in all, then, who is whose friend and who is whose enemy? They are all, tied into the Oneness with God. All those who have reached this higher stage of Realization, feel and behave as One. There is no duality. Please practise and feel it and see for yourself that all are one.

Query **:** What should they do, who have not as yet achieved this higher stage of Realization? Should they quietly surrender themselves to the robbers? Should they allow a *goonda* in the locality to prosper? Should they quietly tolerate the severity of a tyrant? What does your *Vedanta* say in this regard?

Rama **:** There is no friend or foe for him who has evolved to this higher stage of Realization. For him

they are all his own self. Such a man cannot have any enmity with any person. If, however, some one is his enemy, his enmity can no longer stand in the face of such a highly evolved Soul. But they, who have not as yet risen to this higher stage, should continue to make all-out efforts to achieve this stage of Realization. It is most desirable for a student of the preliminary class to continue to rise, step by step, to achieve the master's degree.

If a man cannot think himself to be God, he can, at least, concede that God, being Omnipresent, is in him, as He is in all others. This understanding is good enough for a person in the beginning. When this idea takes firm roots in his heart, he will start seeing God everywhere. And, then, he will perform all his worldly duties in the background of Godliness.

He will, thus, start loving all like himself, irrespective of being friend or foe. Slowly the idea of hatred itself will be vanished from his mind. At this stage, his ego will continue to be on the decline and he will be discharging his worldly duties in an unattached way, caring little for their results.

Dear friends, do not misunderstand *Vedanta.* Since it is based on the Laws of Nature, there can not be any shortcoming in it. According to the *Vedanta,* this entire universe can be compared to the human body. There is a saying in Hindi "What is concised in this body, is spread in the Universe." In other words, this human body is living and developing in accordance with the Laws of the Nature. You can see that in this human body there are different parts or limbs, like hands, feet, head, trunk. Seemingly, these parts are separate from one another, yet they are united into one, being the parts of the same body. You might have also observed that, when a little thorn pricks the sole, the high head bends down to see the spot where the thorn is. The entire body feels the pain, due to the pricking of the thorn, and immediately the hand reaches the

painful spot to remove the thorn. Similarly, there are other organs in the body like eyes, nose, ears, stomach, heart, liver, kidney. If any one of them develops any trouble, the energy of vitality of the whole body is diverted to correct the disorder and to ameliorate and pain. If some foreign matter enters the eye, the inner vitality washes it out through tears. If some undesirable thing enters the stomach through food, it is thrown out through vomiting or purging. If your blood is contaminated or infected, the morbidity is got rid of by Nature in the form of small pimples, abscess or boil, so that the body may remain healthy and normal.

You might have observed that sometimes, when the external aids or medicines prove ineffective to cure the malady of any limb or part, it is amputated or removed through a surgical operation, in order to prevent its poison from spreading to other parts of the body. You might have also seen that, when there is a big abscess on the body of a child, the mother first tries to subside it with fomentation or some medicinal paste. If, however, it gets out of control, she takes her dear child to a surgeon for operation. The mother loves her child immensely and knows that when he would be operated upon, he would cry due to intense pan, yet, she willingly allows the surgeon to use his lancet, so that the poison of he abscess may be taken out to let him regain his normal health.

It has been seen that when a person suffers from cancer, gangrene, appendicitis etc., and, when other remedies fail, the surgeon removes that part to prevent the disease from injuring or harming other parts of the body. The main purpose is to keep the body healthy and normal. The patient also cooperates with the surgeon in the interest of his normalcy. Sometimes, even his hands and feet are amputated to let him live a life of comparative comfort and ease.

Just as different parts of a body are united into One, due to the common soul, all the beings of a

society, country or universe, are united into oneness, though they may appear to be separate from one another. It is so, because of the presence of the all pervading and interpenetrating Universal Soul or God. These seemingly different beings may be compared to the different parts of a body. Now, please apply this very principle to your locality, society or the country. Dear one, if any person of your locality has turned into a *goonda* or a bad character, teases the girls or billies the innocent people it is your foremost duty to try to reform him, through exhortation and polite reasoning. If, inspite of it, he does not come round, you have every right to act as a mother does to allow the surgeon to use his knife to operate the boil or the abscess on the body of her dear child.

Does not the mother love her child? But, being his well-wisher, she hardens her heart to allow the surgeon to carry out the operation. You should also pick up courage to behave similarly with the *goonda* of your locality. You should, if necessary, lodge a report against him with the police and help them, so that others may not follow suit to become *goondas* like him. But, while doing so, you should not harbour the idea of any hatred or spiteful revenge against him. Your only aim should be to reform him, so that your locality or society may be free from this pollution. If, to achieve this aim, some member of the society has to be punished, you should not mind it. It will atleast help make the society clean, healthy and peaceful. But you must not have any feeling of hatred or revenge. Only the call of the selfless duty must prompt you to discharge it whole-heartedly, because you owe a bounden responsibility towards your society and country as well. If any tyrant perpetuates any arrogance, oppression or coercion, you have to face him boldly and make all-out efforts to put a stop to his despotism and tyranny. In other words, you have to discharge your duty faithfully and sincerely, whatever be the consequences.

The *Vedanta* urges you to undertake in the fearless dispensation all these necessary actions as and when needed, just as the Nature does but without any feeling of hatred.

Query : Swami ji, you tell us not to have any feeling of hatred and yet forcefully oppose the severity of the wrong doer. Can it be practically possible in our daily life?

Rama : It is possible and quite possible. You might have noticed that two wrestlers of two different parties or of the same party enter into the wrestling arena. They both wrestle whole-heartedly and to their best to defeat their opponent. But you will concede that they have no feeling of any hatred against one another. Both the wrestlers utilize the techniques of their skill, while discharging their sporting duty in their spirited and dashing competition. In the end they both shake hands smilingly.

Rama again repeats that the parent's earnest desire is to see that their son lives with dignity and distinction. It, however, he deviates from the right path, they first tell him quietly and lovingly to give up his undesirable habits. If he does not listen to them, they scold and frown upon him. And at times they chastise him and even punish him. Inspite of this show of anger, they maintain their love for their dear son, without any feeling of hatred or revenge. It is because of their direct blood relationship that they continue to feel their oneness with him. Their only desire is that their son may lead an honourable life of pride and prestige. If you also feel your oneness of God in the both of you, you will not have any hatred for him. In fact, you will have nothing but love for him. It is a well established fact that the feeling of oneness prompts automatic love. In this way, you will be discharging your duty earnestly, selflessly and with responsibility, without any feeling of hatred or animosity and without caring for the result of your action. You already know that the result of any

action is never in your hand. It always rests with God.

There are a good many examples in history. In the epic war between *Rama* and Ravana, Lord *Rama* at first did his best through different messages to make him (Ravana) realize his mistake. But when he (Ravana) remained adamant, Lord *Rama* had to invade Lanka, even though he had no organized army with him. His so-called army consisted of only primitive and untrained wild animals. *Rama* was prompted by his sense of duty, without any feeling of ill-will or hatred against Ravana. And, since he was confident of the righteousness of his cause, he, naturally, won the battle against Ravana, who was a king of a rich and mighty kingdom and had a big organized and well trained army.

The same was the case in the war of Mahabharata, between the mighty Kauravas and the poor Pandavas. The Pandavas also did their best to make the Kauravas realize their extreme injustice and selfishness. But, when they did not care to listen to the advice of even Lord *Krishna*, the Pandavas had no option but to accept their challenge of war. And, they were the Pandavas who ultimately came victorious because of their right cause. They fought a furious battle during the day. In the evening, when the battle was over, they used to meet each other with love, without any feeling of hatred or malice. It may appear to be rather impossible, but it so happened, as is said.

You also please study the Islamic history. When the Prophet Mohammad invaded Mecca, his soldiers were outnumbered by the army of his opponent. Even then the Prophet, taking it as the order of God, did not hesitate to invade Mecca. There was no feeling of personal animosity in this. His cause was righteous and, therefore, he had to win the war, and as we all know, he did come out with flying colours. The question of any hatred does not arise, when the cause is that of Truth. God is truth. And, where there is God, the victory is ensured. There can not be any doubt in this.

न सस्ते पर न महंगे पर, नहीं मौकूफ गल्ले पर।
फतेह तो बस उसी की है, खुदा है जिसके पल्ले पर॥

"It does not depend upon the cereals, being cheap or dear. But the victory or success ensecured only to the side of God or Truth."

O my dear, you have only to be confidant of your cause. Please observe the Islamic history concerning the battle of Karbala. Was Imam Hussain put to any shame, due to his disastrous defeat in that battle? Has his name been obliterated or defaced? His so-called defeat only glorified him and raised him sky high. He became immortal on account of his undaunted sacrifice for the cause of righteousness. His so-called defeat was his victory in the eyes of Truth.

Has the name of the great heroine of Jhansi, Maharani *Lakshmi* Bai, been disgraced, dishonoured or tarnished by her so-called defeat by the power-greedy Britishers? Has the life of Tantiya Tope come to an end, after he climbed the scaffold in the cause of justice, freedom and liberty? Therefore, the *Vedanta* ordains that without caring for the victory or defeat, benefit or loss, go on doing your truthful duty, depending upon God and God alone. This is the Practical *Vedanta* which can easily be followed in life.

In this connection *Rama* would like to quote a few more individuals to prove that it is quite possible not to hate your adversaries, even though they might have caused you irreparable harm. Some of them remained calm and composed, even when they were in the very jaws of death.

Take the case of Jesus Christ. He was put on cross to suffer his execution. Even on the cross, before his actual death, he prayed to God with loving spirit to forgive them for they did not know what they were going to do.

The Prophet Mohammad was abused and insulted for his godly actions. But, he never entertained any feeling of hatred or revenge. It is said that whenever

he passed by a particular house, a woman would throw rubbish over his head, but he never lost his temper. Once or twice, it so happened that no rubbish was thrown at him. He was surprised and on enquiry, he learnt that the particular woman had been ill for a few days. Mohammad Saheb was moved, went to see her and helped her in her treatment. The woman realized her mistake, apologized and accepted Islam.

You might have heard the name of Mira Bai, the queen of Chittore. She was a very great devotee. In her ecstasy of devotion to Lord *Krishna*, she would start dancing and singing hymns. Her spiritual guide was the famous and God-intoxicated old saint, Ravi Das, a cobbler by caste and profession. She would go to pay her respect to him everyday. The King did not like such activities of his queen. He admonished and inflicted all sorts of torments and tortures on her, but to no avail. In order to get rid of her, he ultimately gave her poison in the guise of *Prasad* of Lord *Krishna*. She devotedly drank it. Immediately afterwards she came to know that it was poison but she had no feeling of resentment or hatred for the King. Taking it to be the *Prasad* of Lord *Krishna*, which could never do her any harm, she soon got lost in singing *Bhajans* or hymns. Her devotion to the Lord was so powerful and potent that the deadly poison had no effect on her. Even the King was surprised at it and apologized. This is a historical fact.

You might have heard of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj. He was an undaunted social reformer. The fundamentalists opposed him tooth and nail. They made his cook administer poison to him. The cook afterwards realized his mistake and repented. He fell at Swamiji's feet and apologized. The Swami, without any feeling of hatred or revenge, directed him not to commit such a heinous crime in future and he not only excused him, but also gave money to leave the state and go underground to avoid the clutches of the law. Swamiji took the whole incident as the will of God and died peacefully.

Rama asserts that you can easily cross all your hurdles of tribulations, if you are true to yourself. You can, then, successfully carry on your toughest duty with love and sympathy without any feeling of hatred, even against hostility, antagonism and animosity. You have only to develop the necessary tolerance and will to execute it tactfully.

Vedanta, therefore, does not allow you to shirk your responsibility, to be inactive or to bow down before any tyrant, if your cause is right or just. Your inertness, indolence or tolerance will further encourage the tyrant in his acts of terrorism or despotism. *Vedanta* expects you to stick to your righteous duty with fearlessness, but with honesty, truthfulness, love for all and hatred for none.

Query : Swami Ji, There is a saying in the Muslim community *"Katlul Moozi, Kablul Iza"*. It means "Kill the tyrant even before he actually commits the tyranny". As against your suggestions, such a saying appears to be in the fitness of things from the worldly point of view. Do you agree with this line of our thought?

Rama : *Rama* does not agree with this saying. 'Kill the criminal even before he commits any crime.' It is unjust to punish a man on mere suspicion. It is on account of such erroneous ideas that your simple and God-fearing Islam has earned a bad name for itself. This is not only unjust, illegal and wrong, but also oppressive and arbitrary. No religion or sect can justify this theory.

Query : But, some people are in the habit of harming others, without any reason of rhyme. Should we not take precaution against them?

Rama : Taking precaution does not means that you should kill them, even before they commit a crime. It is like giving the dog a bad name and then killing him. No. It is not right to do so.

As regards dealing with such persons, *Rama* has

repeatedly told you to discharge your duty with truthfulness, but without hating anybody. Hatred is like an infectious disease. It becomes a vicious circle. As a matter of fact, you should adopt an attitude of love for such a person. And, thus, try to change his prejudicial ideas against you. If, however, he is not prepared to listen to you, leave him alone and keep yourself away from him. The more you try to appease him, the more will he take your good intentions as sycophancy and give himself airs. As you might be aware, the policy of appeasement is never successful. It increases the demands of the bully and encourages his unreasonableness. He will never listen to you. On the contrary, he would further insult you, by heaping imaginary allegations on you and finding baseless aberrations in you, because he is too proud of his transitory wealth, status, power, position or authority. He would think it his insult, if he were to accept your sound advice. Such a man badly suffers from inferiority complex. He is mentally sick and nobody should hate a sick man. He is more to be pitied than hated.

If you consider yourself too weak to tolerate his venomous vituperations, it would be in your own interest to keep yourself away from him. It would be much better for you to run away from him, as a man does from a patient of an infectious disease. Similarly, that person is also sick and ill at ease, who is blind by his prejudice, selfishness, envy, spite, anger etc., and has lost his power to discriminate between good and bad. Please do not associate with him, till he realizes his mistakes and repents. It is far better to keep away from him, to maintain your equanimity and peace of mind than to remain restless, agitated and effervescent by remaining in touch with him. Inspite of all this, you must be careful not to hate him.

Sometimes it has been observed that, when the object of the tyranny of a despot or an unreasonable person is kept away from him, his anger against the

person daring the despot of his derived object is further aggravated. He thinks that the person, whom he wanted to torture, has escaped his clutches. But you must not mind all this. You must continue to follow the path of righteousness. There is a saying :

"हाथी निकल जाते हैं और कुत्ते भौंकते ही रहते हैं।"

It means that the elephants pass on majestically and do not mind barking of the street dogs. So, too, you should not care for the adverse criticism and bitter taunts of your inimical rival. Do not pay any attention to what he says. Please do not forget that all his sayings or doings are in respect of your body. But you are not this body. You are too high to be touched by his irrelevant and spiteful talks. Do not take them to heart. Or, in order to divert your mind away from the distressing effect of his unpleasant and heart-breaking talk, you may quietly repeat the word OM, *Rama*, Allah or God or run away from there. This will help you in keeping yourself cool.

Once an orthodox *Brahmin* went to Lord Buddha and discussed religion with him. When Buddha did not agree with his point of view and controverted all his tricky and unsound arguments, he felt defeated and stated abusing and insulting him (Buddha). But Lord *Buddha*, as was usual with him, kept quiet and, with his eyes closed, got lost in meditation. When the *Brahmin* saw that Buddha did not pay any attention to his abusive insults, he got ready to leave. Lord Buddha then opened his eyes and very politely put a very ordinary question to him: "What should a man do, if he does not want to accept something he has been offered?" The *Brahmin* said "It is very simple. The man can refuse the concerned gift and return it to the giver." Lord *Buddha* then said, "Quite right, I do not accept your insults. They are as such being returned to you."

The bigotted *Brahmin* was so penitent and softened with Buddha's peaceful attitude that he immediately

apologized and entered his fold with all of his followers.

Anger, spite, envy etc., are like infectious diseases. The angry man knows fully well that his anger will agitate his opponent. And, if he fails to do so, due to the peaceful, smiling and unconcerned attitude of his rival, it certainly defeats his very purpose. That is how Lord Buddha, with his quiet and peaceful behaviour, forced the angry and envious *Brahmin* to accept defeat. You can also silence your oppressive and abusive opponent with your serenity and peacefulness. But please remember that no feeling of hatred should enter your mind against him. He is to be lover. And, as such, you should have a feeling of sympathy for him for his ignorance. In the beginning, you might experience some difficulty in implementing this maxim in your daily life, but in course of time, it is sure to be easy.

Query : Why at all are the persons so selfish, virulent and vindictive, as to feel happy and victorious only by injuring the feelings of others?

Rama : Some religions have avoided this question saying that it all depends 'on the will of God'. But intelligent, wise and sophisticated persons are not satisfied with this inference, interpretation or explanation. As you know man could not have reached the present stage of his evolution all of a sudden. He has a achieved this human form, after gradually passing through a series of forms of the lower animals. Even after adopting the human form, he is still continuing to evolve further. The modern scientists could discover and bring to light this theory of evolution only in the nineteenth century, while the Indian philosophers had known it thousands of years ago. The principle of transmigration of soul depends upon the theory of Evolution. The more the selfishness in a man, the more the nature of the lower animals, he possesses. The more selfless he is, the greater is his evolution. In other words, as the circle of love and unity increases in a man, he goes higher in the scale of evolution.

Selfishness is the characteristic and creed of the animals. Since these evil-minded persons have just evolved from the stage of the animals, they still retain some of the animal habits and nature. Therefore, you should not take to heart the evils of such men, who have not yet been able to completely shake off the animalism in them. Their human bodies have, no doubt, developed physically, yet their minds have not developed proportionately. The intellect of such a man is still, so to say, primitive, like that of a child. Nobody hates a child. A child is after all a child. Let him grow and evolve. You can also, if it suits your temperament, help the evolution of such persons. But, you have no right to hate them, even if you can not, for the present, love them. Leave them to Nature will, in its own way, guide them to the path of righteousness. Slowly he would also rise to be equal to you. Who knows, they may one day, surpass you and rise to the higher rung of evolution. If you hate them with a feeling of prejudice and revenge, they may or may not be corrected, but you are sure to be degraded and degenerated. And, then, because of your taking the Law in your own hands, even God will forsake you. *Rama* is reminded here of an interesting incident of Lord *Krishna*, which might help you understand this idea more clearly.

Once Lord *Krishna* was playing *chaupar* (an old game, like that of chess) with the queen Rukmani. While playing, He stopped for a while. Rukmani was surprised and when she asked Him the reason, He said that there was nothing unusual. But Rukmani was not satisfied with this reply. She would not let Him continue with the game, unless He had disclosed His mind. Lord *Krishna* said, "Two washermen were quarrelling. Let them quarrel. Let us continue our game." This puzzled Rukmani all the more. She said "This is the royal palace. Where is the occasion here for the washermen to enter into a tussle or a fracas? I will not let you continue the play, unless you elucidate the whole thing."

Lord *Krishna* then said, "A roaming hermit arrived at the banks of the river Ganga late in the night. In the early morning, he sat down for meditation, after taking his bath in the river.

That was the *ghat* meant for the washermen. While it was still dark, a washerman also reached there with his load of dirty clothes and started washing them. Drops of dirty water reached the hermit and disturbed his meditation. I was just thinking of helping the hermit when he opened his eyes and said in an insulting tone, 'Do you not see that I am absorbed here in meditation?' The washerman also retorted in the same tone, 'Don't you see that this is the washermen's *ghat*? Why did you choose to meditate here.' The infuriated hermit said 'When I came here last night, it was all dark and I could not know, if it was the *Dhobighat*.' The washerman also continued in the same tone, "When I came here then, too, it was dark and, I also could not see you meditating."

"On hearing such prompt replies from the washerman, the hermit was mad with rage. He said, "Being a low caste *Dhobi*, you dare argue with me. I will just teach you a lesson." He picked up his staff. The *Dhobi* also stood up and got ready to fight with his stouter staff. They both are now engaged in a dog fight. One of them was already an illiterate washerman, while the other degraded himself angrily and vindictively to the same level. Now let these two washermen fight and decide the issue themselves. Why should I worry? Let us continue our game."

The only purpose of this story is that under such trying circumstances, you must not take the law into your own hands. You should tackle the situation with equanimity, love, tolerance and thoughtfulness. If you act under the influence of animosity, irritation, excitement, anger etc., the work is sure to be soiled. It does not behove you to come down to the level of an animal, while negotiating with a person of that

temperament. Excited talks may take a serious turn and develop into animated discussions. This may further deteriorate into a dogged fight and may even cause blood-shed or murder.

A Persian poet says :

खुद कर्दा रा इलाजे नेस्त।

"There is no remedy if you yourself spoil your own doings. You will have to suffer the result of your own actions."

Even God does not care to help those who take the law in their own hands, with a feeling of revenge and hatred.

Vedanta allows, you to discharge your righteous duty in an unattached and unprejudiced way and to safeguard the legitimate interests of your society or country. *Vedanta* teaches you love, unity, tolerance, sobriety, equanimity, fearlessness, large-heartedness etc., and not inaction, cowardice, narrow-mindedness or revenge. The only condition is that there must not be any feeling of hatred, abomination or repugnance against your rival or opponent. Therefore, resign yourself to God. Never deviate from your rightful and moral duty.

Why should you be afraid of discharging your duty, when God, who is your real well-wisher, is with you? He will take you safely out of the *Kurukshetra*, the battle-field of this world, with sure success and flying colours. And, when your heart will be clear of hatred, your bitterest enemy will not only become your dearest friend, but will be converted into your own self. Do not doubt it. It is the greatest sin to entertain any doubt about the "Truth."

Please remember that you have to develop a strong and unshakable conviction in your all-time unity with the All-pervading God. If you could do so, with full certainty, *Rama* assures you that success would crown you at every step. This is the immutable Law. You should always consider God, who is impregnating every cell of your body, mind and intellect, to be

somewhere away from you. As a matter of fact you are the Master of this entire universe and you should not consider yourself to be a mere servant or slave.

An Urdu poet says :

इन्सान की जिहालत अलफ़ाज़ के बाहर है।

ख़ुद हो के ख़ुदा, ख़ुद को बन्दा है समझ बैठा।।

"A man's ignorance is beyond description in words.

He is God Himself, but, unfortunately he considers himself to be a mere slave."

Therefore, you should be fearless. There is no need to be afraid of God. He is your well-wisher. He is your ownself. Nobody fears one's own self. It does not become a wise man to be afraid of God. He is to be loved. Instead of keeping Truth in your heart, do you doubt His selfless love for you? Why should you be afraid of One, who loves you like His own Self?

God is Limitless and Infinite. He is Omnipresent. Can a drop in the ocean be separated from it? You can never prove its existence as separate from the ocean. In the ocean, it is the ocean itself. Similarly, can you be called separate from the limitless ocean of Godhood? Certainly not. If, however, you are afraid of proclaiming yourself God, you can atleast understand that He is present in and pervading every cell of your body, mind and intellect.

An Urdu poet says :

अर्जो समां कहां तेरी वसअत को पा सके।

मेरा ही दिल है वह कि जहां तू समा सके।।

"The time and space can not gauge Thy greatness.

It is only my heart which can accommodate Thee."

When God is present in every cell of yours and also all around you, you are surely one with Him, and not separate from Him. Hence, you should always remember that God is within you. When you are fully convinced of this fact, the day will surely come, when

you will fearlessly proclaim that "I am He". And then your ego will merge in the Infinity. Nothing but God will remain. And, then, it will automatically come out of you, in the words of a Persian Poet :

आफ़ताबम, आफ़ताबम, आफ़ताब।
ज़र्रा हा दारिन्द अज़ मन रंगों ताब॥

"I am the Sun, I am the Sun.
Every atom of this universe is reflecting.
My glory and effulgence."

O my dear; do not indulge in the false and insincere flattery of God. He is not to be won over by your cajolery and sycophancy. He takes into consideration only our sincere intentions and actions. Do not be ensnared in the temptation of Heaven. Do not be enamoured of its nymphs. A poet says :

जन्नत परस्त ज़ाहिद कब हक परस्त है।
हूरों पे मर रहा है, वह शहवत परस्त है॥

The holyman, who aspires for heaven, is not a true worshipper of God.
He is dying for its nymphs. He is only a love of sexual pleasures."

Therefore, give up your vicious wish for heavenly enjoyments, but make sincere efforts to realize God. If and when you have succeeded in pleasing Him by your good character and truthful devotion, there is nothing left to be desired.

A King once declared on his birthday that the wishes of each and every person in his mansion would be granted. He fulfilled the demands of all his servants and others. But one maid servant did not ask for anything. When the King enquired, she said that she was doubtful, if the King would be gracious enough to grant her request. When the King assured her that all her demands would be fulfilled, she caught hold of the King's hand and said, "My Lord! I want to have you." The king was taken aback. But since he had already given his word, he had no option but to marry

her. Thus the maid servant got all and became the queen of the entire kingdom.

Similarly, if you develop God-realization or in other words, if you fully establish your oneness with God, you become the master of the entire universe. Do not forget God, whatever be the circumstances. Then and then alone you deserve to be called a true Muslim. Your *Kalma* says, *"La-ilah-illillah"*, which truly means that there is nothing but God. This is exactly, what *Vedanta* says, *"Eko Brahma, dwatiyo nasti."* It also means that there is no duality and that it is all *Brahman* and nothing but *Brahman*. These maxims are not to be repeated like a parrot, but they have to be imbibed sincerely and translated into action. If you remember this Eternal Truth, you will be above duality and will ever remain happy and peaceful.

If you remember the universalism of God in this way, with full faith and strong conviction, your life boat will steer clear of the tempestuous sea. But if you forget Him, it will capsize even in the shallow waters near the coast. Firm conviction in God is the only true and reliable dependence. All else is mere delusion. A poet says :

बस एक सहारा काफी है,
और वह भी ख़ुदाए बर हक का।
हम उनका सहारा क्या ढूंढें,
खुद जिनका सहारा कोई नहीं॥

Only the support of God is enough,
We need not seek the help of those
Who can not support even themselves.

Therefore, please catch hold of Him and feel your oneness with Him. To catch hold of Him means to love all, because He is present in all. You have to give up the differentiation between the *Kafirs* and the *Momins*, i.e., the non-Muslims and the Muslims. You have to love all, like your ownself, realizing God to be Omnipresent. By remembering Him in this way, jealousy,

rivalry, envy, enmity, prejudice etc., will all vanish in no time and you will feel happiness and peace within you. Peace is the essence of the Islam, as ordained in the Koran. If you really want to be a true Muslim in the eyes of God and your beloved Prophet, Mohammad, maintain this peace at all costs.

याद अल्लाह दम पर दम।
किस की शादी किसका ग़म।

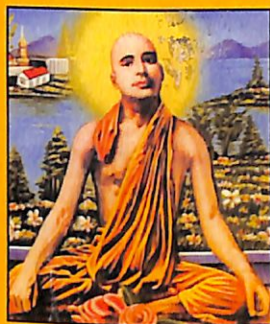
Remember God with every breath,
And, then you have nothing to worry about,
Pain or pleasure.

Muslim Representatives : Swamiji, we all thank you for enlighting us on the delicate issues of religion which have been agitating our minds. We are convinced about the universalism of our *Kalma – 'La-ilah-illillah'* that there is nothing but God. This is non-Dualism of *Vedanta* and this is Reality. We all express our gratitude to you.

Rama : You have just said that there is no Duality. Then who is thanking whom? We all are One. We should live this Truth.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

Islam and Vedant



Please listen to Rama and try to understand what he says. Why do you pronounce Lam (L) as Wao (O) or (U)? Does not Lam (L) become silent here and give the sound of Wao (O or U)? According to the Arabic grammar, when Lam (L) comes between a vowel and a consonant, it becomes silent and give the sound of Arabic Pesh (O or U). Similar is the case here with Alif (A). Lam (L) and Mim (M). Here Lam (L) is in between the vowel Alif (A) and the consonant Mim (M) and therefore it becomes silent and gives the sound of O or U. Accordingly, Alif, Lam and Mim give the sound of Alif (A) Wao (O or U) and Mim (M) i.e. AOM or AUM. This is nothing but OM. This is no secret of God. It is your own ignorance that you do not try to understand your own Koran correctly. It is clearly and unambiguously OM and nothing but OM.

